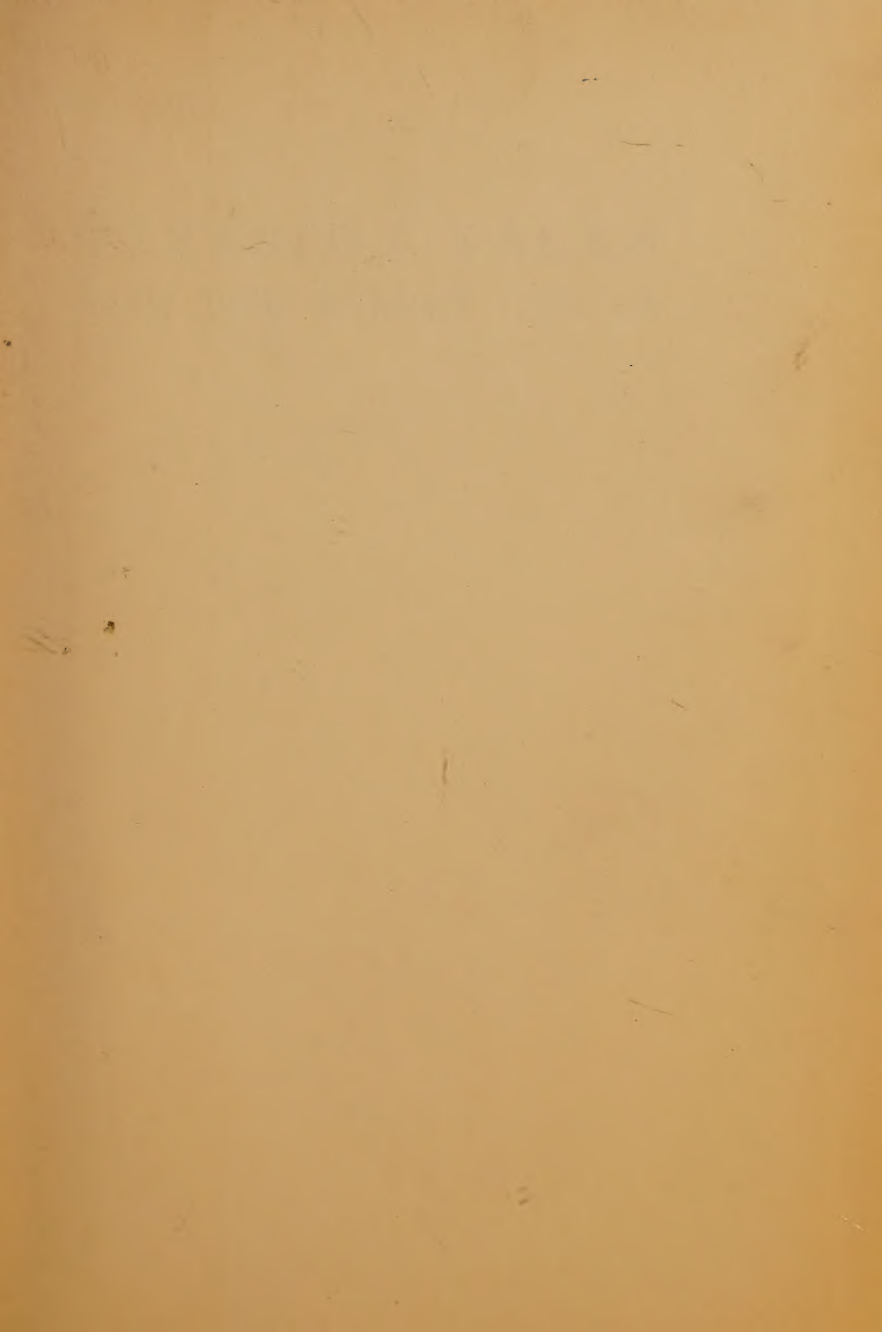


FIRESIDE TALKS For THE FAMILY CIRCLE



· ALBERT · W · BEAVEN ·





**FIRESIDE TALKS
FOR THE FAMILY CIRCLE**

FIRESIDE TALKS FOR THE FAMILY CIRCLE

By **ALBERT W. BEAVEN, D.D.**

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"The Fine Art of Living Together,"

"Putting the Church On a Full-Time Basis,"

etc.



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DEDICATED

To those who have carried on these experiments with me in the two home laboratories

My Wife

Grace H. Beaven

My Children

Winifred Elizabeth

Mary Jean

Robert Haddow

Margaret Helen

My Parents

Samuel William Beaven

Lizzie Baker Beaven

PREFACE

When the first baby comes we pass over a "great divide" and look out upon a new world. Before this event we see life only from one side, that familiar to youth. Afterward we see it from the point of view of the parent as well. Before parenthood we approach life from the angle of one created, afterward we have entered, at least partly, into the experience of the creator.

While we may never think our way through it, we are dimly conscious that here is a new thing under the sun. A new and immortal personality has come, an eternal career has been begun and is to get its direction for eternity under our guidance.

It is no wonder to me that from earliest days that realization has sent parents, with the babe in arms, to the Temple of God both to dedicate the little one to the Eternal Father and in His solemn presence to offer their vows of consecration to the tremendous task before them.

Preface

A babe is an immediate messenger from God to us. Most of us feel this way. On the other hand we know that there is no guaranty that the child will grow up to act as God wills. Indeed we see children all about us growing up to do exactly the contrary. At times we see this happen apparently in spite of the most strenuous efforts of the parents.

If others fail we realize how easily we may also. When we look at the possibility of such failure it seems a tragedy too great to contemplate. We must not fail. But surely if we are to succeed we know we must have all the wisdom available. It is this conviction that gives point to the quest for religion on our part. In addition to all our wisdom and our best endeavor we can thus utilize the help and guidance of the Father of us all. We feel instinctively that He, whose Son took little children in his arms and blessed them; who could see their possibilities clearly enough to say "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," must be able to guide us supremely in this eternally important task. This is what makes religion central in wholesome parental thinking.

Preface

Judging from our own experience as our children were growing up and judging from my observations, during a pastorate of twenty years, of other parents in dealing with the children in their homes, I have come to feel that this instinctive desire on the part of parents to have God's help in rearing their children should have as much practical aid and guidance as possible.

Working out certain aids, first in our own home and then going over them in the company of others in our church, working together in what we called "The Commission on Religion and the Home," we have gathered most of the ideas and conducted most of the experiments noted in this book. It contains many of the suggestions which we have found valuable during these years. Much of what appears here has appeared before in articles written by the author for various magazines. We acknowledge the courtesy of those who have cooperated in its republication.

The book is sent out with a realization that it is very incomplete. It professes no profound philosophy or psychology. Our hope is that it may aid in making Christian homes

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more efficient as centers for religious training by helping parents with definite and practical suggestions. We know this object is worthy, the value unquestioned, and to that end specific suggestions are a great aid. If this book can serve even in a small way to obtain that result we shall be satisfied.

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I

QUALIFYING AS PARENTS

Before we turn to discuss the use of religious training in spirit and method, in the larger group of parents and children, let us pause to note its practical usability in helping us, as parents, to solve our own problems.

Happy home life for the entire group of parents and children depends upon the happy relationship between parents. If religion is to help our children it will be because it has helped us. Any lasting impression which it makes upon our children will be largely determined by its reality to us. Children soon come to know whether the religion we have is real or merely a theoretical approach to religion. If the latter is all it will never impress them deeply.

Real religion is necessary, however, not simply because we need to have it to give to our children, but because it is the most practical bit of furniture we can take into our home

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for our own good. Christ can teach us more that is necessary for us to know than we can learn anywhere else.

Let Us Seek Advice

When we want guidance on a given matter, we seek the advice of one who knows that subject. If it is a matter of law, we seek a lawyer; if music, a musician; if architecture, an architect. The world's masters in any field command the greatest following. Let us take this same principle and relate it to our home lives and the Master. We need the advice of a specialist in the adjustment of our two lives in the home. The simple fact is that it is a very delicate thing to take two individuals, each one of whom has previously been living a separate life, consulting largely his own desire and approaching each situation from the standpoint of self, and get them to adjust their lives to a new situation where every question, to be settled successfully, must be settled from the view-points of two instead of one.

This change from a single to a double point of view is complex anywhere. The securing of a satisfactory relationship between two folks

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in wedlock is about the most difficult and continuous operation that is known. It will not come automatically or as a by-product of the fact that they are married. It is an achievement—one to be struggled for, and one that probably will not come without constant and intelligent effort. We need to get the best instruction possible as to the method of its accomplishment. We need, further, some great inspiration to help us patiently learn its various lessons.

The Master Teacher

Given these needs, where shall we get such an instructor? Where else except in the Man of Galilee? He is the world's outstanding specialist here. We are accustomed to say that love is the great solvent of difficulties in married life. This is true. Yet Jesus is, in one sense, the chief exponent of love. He is the only world leader who both trusted love as a motive and emphasized it at the very heart of life. Others depended upon force; upon organization; upon political manipulation or upon money. Jesus belted his enterprise to the dynamo of love and it worked. Therefore,

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if we are going to run an institution which depends upon love, and by its nature cannot depend upon force, or money, or political influence, for its driving power, it is normal for us to turn to the teachings of Jesus and learn what he has to say. He speaks with authority on this subject.

Another reason for turning to him is that he gives both sides an equal chance. For centuries others had predicated the married relationship upon man's superior physical force. Jesus taught the equal worth of each personality and laid the foundation for a new status for womanhood. In this realm Jesus said more that was constructive than any other person who has ever lived. His ideas of unselfishness and of service, kindness and fair-dealing as the basis of a permanent human relationship have been more revolutionary and more prophetic than the teachings of any other of the world's great leaders. They point to a platform on which both men and women can stand.

Again the most limited observation of home life will indicate the fact that permanently satisfactory relations between two people de-

pend upon character. If they cannot trust each other, they cannot long love each other. If there is no quality to the material there can be no permanence to the ties that hold the material together. No matter how strong a steel band you have, you cannot bind two clouds together. No matter how strong the steel cable, you cannot lash two fog-banks into permanent position. Goodness, dependability, honesty, truthfulness, purity, self-control, and other elements in personal character are essential materials for securing the highest type of permanently happy home life. Most homes that fail, fail from the lack of these things. But here again, Jesus stands as the world's greatest teacher. Who else can compare with him as an instructor about, or example of, character?

Further than this, two people who are thinking of creating a home marked by contentment, must recognize that their venture is, in large part, a spiritual one. As we usually put it, "If two people have the right spirit they will get along well." What do we mean? Simply that they have the right inner attitude toward life and toward each other. But this

is largely a spiritual quality. But this again brings us into his presence. It is in this realm of the spiritual where he moves with supreme authority. To this day the world looks up to him as the outstanding spokesman in matters spiritual.

The School of Happiness

So we commend to the two people, who have stood before man and God to take the vows of wedlock, that they humbly enter the school of the Christ. If they will take him as one of the partners in the home, mutually seek his wisdom, and submit their differences as they rise to the solutions suggested by his spirit, they will be amazed at the practical results they will achieve in the fine art of living happily together.

Under the spell of his spirit, arguments that could lead to permanent irritation and be causes of the development of stubbornness and selfishness on both sides, will be found to be highways along which the two can walk together into a better understanding of each other.

It is not simply physical love, but love that

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includes the elements of the physical, mental, and spiritual, that is the fruit of the Master's spirit, that can produce the kind of things of which Paul spoke when, as translated by Doctor Moffatt, he says:

Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient.

It is the Master's spirit that brings "the will to understand" that enables us to see the other person's point of view. What a marvelously fruitful suggestion he gives us in his Golden Rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them." Our trouble comes because we *do unto others* as they *do unto us*, so we are kept busy "getting even." The meanness and selfishness of the other party becomes a mark which we try to surpass.

Jesus' Golden Rule, when applied, changes the approach to every problem. He says, "Do not do what the other does to you," but "Do unto the other what you would like to have the

other do to you." This forces us to see the other person's point of view. More than that it requires us to lift the other to an ideal situation and then try ourselves to climb up to that ideal. Under Jesus' guidance "getting even" becomes a factor to lift us up, not to pull us down.

Experimenting With Religion

In truth, a Christian home is a small laboratory in which two people can start carrying out a series of experiments. They may take the differing elements of their two personalities and by the aid of his divine alchemy learn how to fuse these two differing factors into a new and more useful element that shall bring them both happiness and make them a blessing to the world.

It is a successful outcome of the old quest for a method of turning the baser metals into gold. What a fine suggestion that is which comes from Prof. Augustine Smith, of Boston University: that every house that shelters a Christian home should be made sacred to God by a service of dedication as meaningful as the exercises by which a church building is

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set apart for his worship. Thus the very house and its rooms become the tools of his spirit and aid the two inmates to take into their lives the spirit of Jesus; they then begin to produce those fruits which Paul catalogued as love, joy, peace, good temper, kindness, generosity, fidelity, gentleness, self-control.

So in this first chapter, we urge that the two who start the home shall undertake, long before the children come—even before the strain of prospective motherhood, such steps as will make them eager pupils in the School of the Master. The quiet time of the evening prayer, the daily meditation upon the Words of the Great Teacher, and the steady attempt to practise his principles are but parts of the curriculum of that school. If later they are blessed by having children, by being privileged to teach them the things of God, they will speak words to them touched by the glory of a conviction which grows out of their own experience.

II

THE CHURCH THAT IS IN THY HOUSE

By closing my eyes, I can go back in a moment, to that sacred experience in our life when our first little one came. Then I began to realize that that little babe, lying so still in my arms and whose tiny hand clasped my finger so caressingly, had placed upon us a new and solemn demand. I knelt in prayer that night by the bedside of the mother, and we two prayed for the little life which God had given to us. We looked together down the trail of the future and pictured what it would mean to us if that little life could truly grow as God wanted it to grow; we prayed that our children after us should actually become good men and women, real servants of the Kingdom of God who should pass on to their posterity the heritage of Christian faith and character that we felt had been given to us. Back of us on both sides were generations of sturdy

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though humble Christian people. Among them had been many whose lives had been given to Christian work as ministers, missionaries, or laymen. We felt we were the " heirs of those ages " and prayed earnestly the old prayer, " God of our Fathers, be the God of our succeeding race."

But as we faced the fact that our children after us would or would not pass on that inheritance depending on our training, we then and there realized how serious was the obligation that rested upon us to train them for God. Like Abraham and Sarah of old, we had asked a child from the Lord, and he had granted our request. And like them, too, we felt that we needed to erect an altar in our midst and call upon the name of the Lord.

Who Will Train the Babe?

But granted that we recognize the obligation, where should we look for this Christian training which our children must have? Almost every Christian home faces the same query. The answer we found is the explanation of this book, namely, that we, as parents, must accept the primary responsibility for that

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training and find it inside and not outside the home.

Religious training of childhood is a first duty for Christian parents. We cannot turn it over to any one else. Certainly we cannot look to the school nor the state for the inculcating of great religious ideals and convictions. They are not permitted to teach religion. Nor can we shift the burden to the church—that marvelous institution which for two thousand years has been gathering children within its walls and instructing them in the things of God. The church that is on the corner can help us, but “the church that is in our house” is the institution to which we must first look, and as we are responsible for the functioning of that church we must accept the challenge.

The Home First, the Church Second

Let us think this through for a moment. With that tendency toward increasing dependence upon the institutions of society that is sometimes evident in our modern age, parents so easily assume that the church will do all that is necessary for their children in things religious, just as they so often assume that the

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school will do what is necessary for their children in things mental. But this is not true. If the home will not allow the children to go to the church, the church cannot even begin the task. Obviously the church cannot be held primarily responsible in fulfilling this function because there is no compulsion that it can exercise to bring the children within its influence such as the school has. Again, even if the church does establish a contact and undertakes to help our children, we can, by our direct or indirect influence, prevent the success of that effort. These two simple facts give the home control of the situation.

In any case the children belong to us and not to the church. We brought them to the birth. They are our creation. We cannot place upon the church responsibility for the obligations which we have created.

But another group of reasons exists which shows that no matter how much the church may try, the greatest opportunity will always rest with the home.

First, it is true because of the nature of religion. Nine-tenths of religion is learned by practising it, one-tenth by theory. We learn

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to live Christian lives by living them, just as we learn to drive an automobile by driving it or learn to swim by swimming, and the place where it is to be practised is not going to be in the church, but in the home.

“ He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” A child may learn this in the church, but the test that shows whether it has become a reality is made in the home when he hits his finger with a hammer, or when a bitter word springs to the lips and the temper is likely to be unleashed.

“ If thine enemy hunger, feed him.” These words can be learned in the church-school class, but they will be mere words unless with brother and sister or playmates the child can learn to substitute a kindlier reaction for the old “ getting-even ” or “ eye-for-an-eye ” spirit, when he feels that injustice has been done to him.

This is true all through our lives. “ Come unto me, and I will give you rest.” “ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow, I will fear no evil.” These words may be read in the church service, but it is out in the school of

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experience where they pass from literature into life, from theory into actual religion. "Religious truth" only becomes "religion" when it is incarnated in life. This is why the home must always be the main center for religious training.

Again, we might point out that the home will be first because it begins its contacts with children earlier and has them more continuously than does the church; they are not broken by the moving of the family from one town to another, nor interrupted by cases of sickness. Sickness which almost deprives the church of its chance of instruction works even to increase the contacts of the home.

The home's opportunity is greatest because it has more time for the work. The ordinary child has 105,000 waking hours between birth and twenty-one years of age. If he attended the church school all the time it was open during these years, it would get about 2,100 hours; the secular school would get about 10,000 hours; the home would have about 92,000 hours.

But further than that, the parents have a relationship to the child that no one else can

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secure. Particularly is this true in the early years. They start with the asset of an attitude of confidence on the part of the child which another teacher has to acquire slowly. To the average little one, Father and Mother are hero and heroine of life. The very language of our religion is couched in the terms of the home: "Father," "home," "love," are words that serve equally as terms of religion and home life.

No, the home is the place. The "church in our house" is more important for teaching our children the realities of God and the principles of Jesus than the "church in the temple." The church can help and should help, but its obligation and opportunity are not primary.

We Can Help the Church

You who read these lines are probably both parents and church-members.

The final word of this chapter then, the writer would address to you in your capacity as members of a local church. Your church is probably aiding you greatly by its instruction of your children. How much is it aiding you

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to make your home efficient as a training center for the religious life of your group? If a church does the first so well that it is inducing you to neglect the second, the Kingdom may be the loser. Possibly the greatest chance the church has is in stimulating its homes to action along this line and aiding the parents to undertake their duty intelligently. Can you influence your church to perform this service more effectively? ¹

All that is necessary to say here is to indicate that a group of thoughtful parents in any church, organized into some sort of commission which will study the question of the use of the home for training in religious things, could enable the resources of that church to be put at the disposal of other parents in a way which would greatly increase the results obtained by the church itself.

¹In the book *Putting the Church on a Fulltime Basis* the author has outlined in the chapter "The Next Great Opportunity" rather complete suggestions as to the method by which he believes a church could more fully enter this field.

III

THE FAMILY ALTAR AND THE ALTERED FAMILY

So far we have dealt largely with the general subject of the need for placing religion at the center of the home. We come in these next chapters to discuss some of the ways and means to that end. Importance and the length of time it has been in use dictate that we first consider that beloved institution of the fireside which we call the "family altar."

How many of us can pay our tribute to the blessings of that custom in our parental homes? An incident in the life of my own father always stands out to me as illustrating its powers and possibilities. He was reared in a home where the daily altar was the custom. His father and mother were English people, God-fearing and devout. Before he was born he was dedicated to the ministry by his mother. As a lad he was converted and later baptized by Charles H. Spurgeon. At nineteen he left England to make his way in America. His

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mother followed him with her prayers, never forgetting the ministry to which she had dedicated him. Out of dire poverty she saved a few pennies to help buy the pulpit in the first church of which he should be the pastor.

But the lad, far away in the midst of the wild life of railroad gangs and mining-camps of the early West, drifted farther and farther, not only from any idea of the ministry but from his profession of faith. It was his "dark age" as he tells it.

He hated to write home, but when he did his mother read between the lines what was happening in his soul, but her faith never wavered. At last she became sick unto death. She knew she would not see her oldest boy again, but on her death-bed she gave the pennies to her husband and told him to keep them for the purpose she had in her heart.

"Never fear," she said, "some day he will preach."

She went on, but her memory and the memory of those daily prayers lingered.

Thousands of miles across land and sea those prayers were to have their answer. One night in the twilight in the forests of Oregon, amid

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the gigantic tree trunks that make pillars in "God's first temples," the boy for whom the mother had prayed, felt the mystic spell of her petitions, heard in memory the prayers she had lifted for him, found his way back to God, and at last dedicated himself to the preaching of the gospel. In a little church in Moscow, Idaho (for there her boy had his first pastorate), those English pennies were transmuted into the pulpit in faith and hope for which she had planned.

Many who read these lines could bring memories as meaningful to them as this is to me, but each memory would be another tribute to the blessings that have come through prayers lifted to the throne of Grace by loved ones within the home circle.

The classic description of this custom is, of course, that which is found in the familiar description of an evening in a Scotch household by Burns:

THE COTTAR'S SATURDAY NIGHT

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride:

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His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care,
And "*Let us worship God!*" he says, with
solemn air.

They chant their artless note in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name;

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme:
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head;

Then kneeling down to heaven's eternal King
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days.

Compar'd to this, how poor religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's every grace, except the *heart*.
The *Power*, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the soul,
And in his *Book of Life* the inmates poor enroll.

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But Can We Have This Today?

It is sometimes said that the family altar is a thing of the past. This is usually excused by saying that our age is a hurried age, and that members of the family leave home at different times and there is no convenient opportunity for such an occasion as family worship.

While we may recognize the difficulties and admit the improbability of reproducing in a modern American home the type of family gathering pictured in "Cottar's Saturday Night," yet I refuse to believe that parents and children of the modern home could not get the essential values of the old institution of the family altar if they were convinced that those values were real and they wanted them.

What are the genuine values of that ancient custom? In a broad way we may answer, "the bringing of the family life into daily touch with God." But it had many by-products that were immensely valuable.

It put the father in the center of his family as its priest. His voice was heard in prayer for his children, and the children had the benefit of hearing the deepest yearnings of their

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parents presented before God. Few boys and girls could fail to be influenced by such a daily occurrence.

Again, it taught the children the language of the Bible. They came to know, by regular reading, the characters of the Bible, its stately language and its majestic precepts.

It taught the children to pray. Many a child has first heard its own voice in public prayer at the family altar. My mother has testified that through the prayers we children offered around the family circle once a week, on Sunday morning, she was able to keep closely in touch with our spiritual development and know when special temptations were upon us, or spiritual crises were being met. I can remember, when oftentimes after worship I went to give mother a kiss ere I went to school, a special look or word would let me know that she understood, and I would go forth strengthened by the sense of her undergirding sympathy.

We sometimes hear that the children were bored by the old custom. Some, no doubt, were, by the long prayers and hard discipline, but for every such a one there were scores whose daily

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lives were strengthened and into the structure of their lives the steel girders of spiritual power were built.

We Certainly Need It

But can we perpetuate this today, or at least get its real values? That we need it even more than of old is obvious. The home controls even less of a percentage of the influences that enter into the lives of our growing children than ever before. It has the greater reason therefore to make the contacts it does have powerful and spiritually invigorating.

Certainly, if we needed it under the old conditions, we need it even more under the new ones. The secular interests and fascination of the material world make early and insistent demands on our children. Where will they get the spiritual touch with God if not in the home and at the hand of Christian parents?

We certainly need it. Is there a way to get it? The only way is to recognize that it is a thing of first value and other things must be fitted about it. Thousands of homes which had taken for granted that the family altar had gone, are finding that it not only can be

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brought back in its reality, but that that reality is so vital as to be incalculably great.

Any home that will take ten minutes a day and use it seriously and sincerely for family worship, will gain values that can never be overstated. Can any other thing that uses the time it would take, be worth more? Can any Christian home really defend the proposition that it could not set up its plans to get the time if it really wanted to?

It can be done. It ought to be done. This chapter, then, is an appeal for a reestablishment of a reality that corresponds to the "Family Altar."

IV

TYPES OF WORSHIP IN THE HOME

Let us go on now to discuss more in detail the actual development of worship as a factor in family life. It is well to get clear at the beginning that worship is not merely the forms of prayer or the words of the song we use. Primarily it is the internal attitude of reverence that displays itself in the very tone of voice with which persons refer to God and sacred things, in the attitude the family takes toward moral issues, toward the church and the Bible, and in the way its members act in times of family crises. While in my boyhood home we had the usual forms which worship takes to express itself, I am certain that my profoundest impressions were received from a real sense of the overshadowing presence of God which came because of my parents' attitude in the various situations which arose.

While we would all admit the reality of and necessity for this background, no one will doubt that there is distinct value in having

Types of Worship in the Home

certain times and forms through which this spirit of worship expresses itself. When we love one another our very love is appreciated more when we take time to express it, so an attitude of worship in the home is strengthened and made real to the impressionable minds of the children by the forms through which it is ministered. Among these forms we naturally deal first with the technique of conducting family worship.

The Family Altar

This is the time of day when the thought of the whole group is definitely turned toward God. Through the Bible he speaks to the family and through prayer the family speaks to him. The careful watch-care of the parents is needed to see to it that though repeated daily it does not degenerate into formalism, but with such a watch-care it can be made one of the great contributors to spiritual growth on the part of all. It should never be looked upon as a cast-iron form into which the family is to be pushed once a day, but as the normal expression of their attitude toward God, to be entered into as naturally as a child says

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“ Thank you ” when a kindness has been done to him by some one.

Care should be exercised also in the approach to the act of worship. We should not adopt an unnatural tone and a “ holy look ”; at the same time the coming into God’s presence must be real enough so that it shall seem natural for all to be quiet and reverent.

Family worship, so called, usually takes place after the morning or evening meal. It should never be very long; ten minutes ought to be ample. While the program should be varied from time to time so that it will not seem stilted to the child, ordinarily there is some part of the time given to Bible reading. Usually this is progressive from day to day till a certain section of the Bible is covered. It is well, however, not to have the children feel that they know ahead everything that is to be done at the worship hour. Variations in the routine can be introduced. At one time, for instance, the reading may be done by the father. At another time, verses may be read in turn. Different versions read by different people sometimes give the advantage of comparing the wording and seeing the dif-

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ferent points of view. At times, too, it is valuable to change the whole routine and throw the leadership back on one of the children. Ask that one to select his favorite chapter, read it, and tell why he likes it. +

Some families have used morning family worship as a chance to set some special practical ideal before the children for their daily life. One morning, for instance, when the story of the Good Samaritan had been read the children were asked to see how many people they could find during the day who would come within the definition of "neighbor," as they thought that was outlined by the story told by the Master. The next day they were asked to see how many deeds they could perform toward others that they could describe as neighborly acts. Still another week they were asked to practise each day one of the "fruits of the Spirit" as it was outlined in Galatians 5:22.

Memory passages known to the entire family can be repeated in unison as part of the group worship. In our church we had a splendid time using a set of memory verses, each verse beginning with a different letter

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of the alphabet. These "A, B, C" verses, as they were called, were used not only in church but for family worship. They were used in the homes for memory tests on Sunday afternoons, used separately for graces at the table, and thus became the possession of a large proportion of the people in the congregation, even members of the radio congregation writing in for copies of them. Such a list could easily be made by any pastor or by parents or by the children themselves. Many churches now have monthly "memory Scriptures" which are most valuable as suggestions for special Scriptures for use in the family group.

The next item is usually the hymn. It is well to have each member of the family have a hymn-book and have the different children, at different times, select the hymn. They should be taught to memorize these as far as possible. If the church they attend has a memory hymn for each month, as is the custom in some churches, this is a good time to use it and learn it. Because we deal with this subject more fully in a later chapter we pass it here with this brief reference.

The third element of worship is ordinarily

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the prayer. This should not be long, should avoid phrases that appear from morning to morning; should refer to definite and vital things in the life of the family and to those who are known to the children. It should not simply include petition but should express thanksgiving and confession as well. It should refer to special occasions, such as birthdays, parties, sickness, examinations, accidents, and other things that are fresh in the minds of the children. Children love to hear their own names in prayer, and feel that God has a close relation to their every-day life. At the close of the personal prayer that may be offered by father or mother, or in some cases by one of the children, the entire group might unite in repeating the Lord's Prayer.

Grace at the Table

Grace at the table seems so natural and is so easily adopted that almost any home could, and should, use it. A little child who saw a tiny chick raise its head after taking a drink, said, "Oh, mother, look, the chicken is thanking God." He was commenting upon an attitude that would seem a natural expression in

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view of God's goodness to us. If it is a real act of worship, grace at the table puts the whole family gathering on a high plane. It is often done by uniting in the repeating of a verse of Scripture. One of the loveliest verses for this purpose is the second verse of the One Hundred and Third Psalm, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." The sense of family unity in this act of thanksgiving is increased by uniting hands around the table when the verse is recited. Ofttimes the child has a verse to repeat, and this is done while the entire family bow reverently. Such a child's grace is the following:

God bless our food
And make us good,
For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Another grace that is often used on birthday occasions is the following:

FOR BIRTHDAY OCCASIONS
Our Father, we thank thee
That all the year through
Thy goodness has blessed him ¹

¹ The pronoun can be changed from "him" to "her," as the case may be.

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With gifts ever new.
We thank thee for blessings
Sent down from the sky;
Thy care was about him
When dangers were nigh.
Our Father, we pray thee,
Be thou ever near,
And oh, do thou give him
A happy new year,
For Jesus' sake. Amen.

I have often been impressed with the fitness of the Doxology as a form of returning thanks around the table, for all can unite in the singing of its familiar words; it makes almost an ideal grace. Other words to the same tune are these:

Be present at our table, Lord;
Be here and everywhere adored.
Thy mercies bless, and grant that we
May feast in paradise with Thee.

I believe, however, that the grace used should be changed frequently. Saying the same thing every time easily becomes formal, and we do it without thinking of the meaning. A variation of which our children were very fond when they were young and which indeed

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they do not seem to outgrow entirely is given here as a suggestion.

After using the verse " Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," we would call on each one to name a special " benefit " which he had in mind as an expression of God's goodness and a reason for gratitude. This focuses attention and creates a psychology of definiteness when grace is repeated.

The great objective of grace at meals, of course, is twofold: First, to create the sense of the presence of God in the group, and second, to give expression to the feeling of gratitude toward him for his blessings.

Bedtime Prayers

Traditionally, this is the most beautiful of the forms that worship takes in the home. The custom for most of us has been lifelong. It forms a great opportunity for the mother in the early days of childhood. Not only does it let her come with the child into the time of its personal prayer, but there is created by the very act a mood in which both child and mother come to a high and sacred place from

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which they can review the events of the day. For us all, things look differently when seen in the Master's presence. Acts of selfishness, petulance, and temper on the part of a little child, or the ungracious, boorish, ill-mannered acts of an older child, can be seen as they really are when illuminated by the light of the mood of prayer.

Usually the earliest prayer used is one that is learned, such as "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," or "Now I lay me down to sleep." Another one often used is the following, either one verse used separately or all three as one prayer:

Jesus take this heart of mine,
Make it pure, and only thine.
I thy little child would be,
Help me, Lord, to live for thee. Amen.

Help us to do the things we should,
To be to others kind and good;
In all we do in work or play
To grow more loving every day. Amen.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep,
In the morning and all day long,
Keep me good and make me strong. Amen.

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Parents should be careful that the child knows the meaning of the words and is able to enter into the sentiments that are expressed so that praying does not become purely repetition. Later, though not too early, the child should be encouraged to voice prayer in its own words.

One teaching of modern psychology has thrown a good deal of light upon the value of evening prayer. It emphasizes the effect upon the subconscious mind of the closing conscious thought with which we sink to sleep. Our last thought before going to sleep becomes the theme on which the subconsciousness will dwell during the sleeping hours. If this theory is at all true it puts the custom of evening prayer in a new place of importance. If the last moments before sleep are spent in the presence of the Master they will be efficient spiritually in ministering to the subconscious personality all through the night. The theory also puts the mother in a new place of power where she can affect the innermost recesses of her child's nature by guiding the little one from day to day in its bedtime prayers.

Types of Worship in the Home

Private Prayer

As this act of worship relates itself to the family life, the parents should attempt to guide the children to the privilege of personal prayer, being careful to help the boy or girl recognize that it is not saying the prayer that automatically creates credit. We may be as guilty of "vain repetition" as people were in Christ's time. But private prayer is bringing the soul into the presence of its Maker; a personal contact with God through which we enter by confession, thanksgiving, and communion into the joy of his forgiveness and the sense of his comradeship. If we can create, on the part of our children, an appreciation of the value and purpose of prayer and develop habits which make it normal, we have gone about as far as parents can go.

Blessed is that home in which the sense of God's presence is so real that these various forms of worship are the normal acts of life.

V

BIBLE STORIES IN THE FAMILY CIRCLE

“ Tell me a story, daddy.” To any parent these words suggest some of the loveliest moments in life. Is there any experience that stirs within us the joy of parenthood more than to have a little child four years old nestle down in our arms and look up with that look of mingled satisfaction and expectation that comes with the familiar words, “ Tell me a story ”?

The story is one of the early channels through which impressions enter the soul of a growing personality. It is not only one of the earliest, but one of the broadest, for the mood of the story hour is always the mood of the open door. When a story is being told every door in the little life is wide open for inspiration. The story offers the father and mother a chance to utilize intelligence, emotion, and love, and utilize all at one time in an

Bible Stories in the Family Circle

attempt to mold the plastic life of the little one before them. A parent who does not realize this fact, or fails to use story-telling for character-building, is losing a great opportunity.

The mother is probably given a more frequent opening in this realm because each day seems to bring a naturally recurring chance. Bedtime is almost universally story-time. But the father who abdicates this privilege on the basis that he is too busy, or that it is not his gift to tell stories, is losing more than he can well afford to lose. No parent should hesitate on the ground that story-telling is an art that he does not possess. It is a gift that can easily be developed by practise. Let such a parent take time to read such a book as *Stories and Story Telling in Moral and Religious Education*, by Edward Porter St. John, or *How to Tell Stories to Children*, by Sarah Cone Bryant, or, if it is the telling of the story which seems difficult, begin by reading a story from any one of a score of Bible story-books that might be suggested, such as Coe's *Stories for Sunday Telling*, or Hurlbut's *Story of the Bible*.

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Tell Them Yourself

But, as soon as possible, let the parent get the art of telling the story verbally. This gives a closer contact with the child, makes the story seem far more living and vital, and has the added attraction of the parent's own imagination and personality to make it interesting to the child.

In developing the art of story-telling, one can get a cue as to what interests children by watching them while different kinds of stories are read in their hearing. The Uncle Wiggly stories, for instance, seldom fail to capture the little one's attention. These stories live before the child. They are so vital, as some one has said about another bit of literature, that "if you cut them they bleed." It is this spontaneous vitality that the child loves. To make it a real story, one must have it so clearly in mind that it can be told without hesitation, and the teller should enter into it so that it will fire his imagination and its meaning will play over his face so that the child, eagerly listening, lives within himself the events as they are told.

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Illustrate Them

Little actions to illustrate add to the interest. When the dove is sent out from the ark and comes back, instead of a prosy, historical recital, picture it beating its wings against the door, or window, and knock with the hand to show how it might have sounded, then picture Noah, and wife, and all the children gathering to see the result of the dove's trip.

When the ark settles on the mountain after its stormy voyage, instead of a recital in staid language, words that come from the child's vocabulary can be used, such as "all of a sudden, bumpty-bump, bumpty-bump, the big boat caught on a big rock, and the first thing they knew the water was down where they could see that they were on top of a big hill."

Story Folks Can Teach

Story-telling is valuable as entertainment, and to establish contact, but here we stress the point that it is particularly useful to create religious and moral impressions in a child's life.

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There is an endless list of fine stories that can be read or told. We commend conference with the librarian in the children's department of the public library for this material. But we want here to emphasize particularly the availability and usefulness of Bible stories. There is no story-book comparable to the Bible. Its stories of the Father's care, beginning with the Garden of Eden, are fascinating to little children. The fund need never be exhausted. And it would be hard to overstate the value of the real spiritual impressions created by the stories of God's love for the children of Israel, of his protecting care around little Moses and Samuel, and his guidance of the boys David and Joseph. The loveliest introduction to the Master for any tiny tot would be to let the little one see Jesus with the children in his arms. This, in itself, would form a splendid background for all else they learned later about the Man of Galilee. The child who learns first about the Bible from the stories which the parent can cull from its pages has also been given an attitude toward the Bible in terms of interest that no subsequent experience can easily displace.

Bible Stories in the Family Circle

Begin Simply

With smaller children, the following progressive method of procedure will help to make the Bible stories permanent in their memories. At first, repeat the same story; it will be found that they love to have it told over and over again. A little later, in order to get the child to participate, it will be possible to tell the story without names, getting the child to supply the name of the hero or heroine to fit into the story. Still another stage of development is indicated when you can tell the name of the hero or heroine and get the child to add such incidents about the person as he can remember. A more final stage of development comes when you can say, "Tell me the story of Moses," and the child can tell it as it has been told.

While the stories are of greatest formative value in the child's earliest years, we should remember that the Bible and religious literature offer some of the most marvelous hero stories for the child from ten up to eighteen. In the Bible itself, and in missionary literature, a child can get as real a thrill as it can

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get in any literature. No stories anywhere are finer for youth than those of Joseph, Moses, David, Samuel, Samson, and others taken from the Scriptures. Further, in such a book as Hodges' *Saints and Heroes in the Middle Ages*, or in the great biographies of Savonarola, John Knox, Luther, Livingstone, Paton, Carey, and Judson, children get the lift of heroic living and high courage, as well as a wider understanding of church history, and God's dealings with his children.

John Lord has a theory that history is largely a story of the outstanding people who have lived. On that ground he believes that most history can be told in biographies. Surely the life experiences of great people of the past form one of the keys to history and to life today, and are of perennial interest to each generation. Our children, who become familiar with these stories, are enriching their lives by the broadening experiences of the past, and will tend to become the "heirs of all the ages in the foremost files of time."

VI

THE FAMILY LIBRARY

“ Good books are life’s best friends,” some one has said. Today any home can have its quota of “ best friends ” if it will. Obviously a home can best protect its children from the worthless and cheap reading material of today by getting them to appreciate the best in literature. Nor does that best need to be uninteresting.

A few days ago I picked up a catalogue edited by my father when he was secretary of the board of the public library started in Moscow, Idaho, in 1884. He was one of a company of men who believed that in all the pioneer villages good books would be a source of development to the community, and in the foreword to the catalogue he quotes from Arthur Penn, in the *Century Magazine*, saying: “ You cannot cure a boy of reading *The Bold Brigand of Dead Gulch* by giving him *Student’s Home*, one of the driest books that ever made a boy thirsty, but you might get him to

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give up *Lone-eyed Jim* to read one of Mayne Read's stories."

The principle that operated back there more than forty years ago holds good today.

"Dangerous Reading"

The main objective in this matter of books for the child is not gained simply by buying good books and having them as decorations for a shelf in our libraries. The real goal is to get the child to cultivate a taste for reading that is wholesome, because if he wants the cheap and trashy he will be sure to find a way to get it.

That has always been true. It is desperately true today when not simply our novels offer what William Byron Forbush called "a great mass of barnyard literature," but when on almost any news-stand a boy or girl can buy for a few cents, on the way home from school, magazines that are so lascivious and suggestive as to be dangerous in the very extreme.

Sherwood Eddy states that in one small town where a survey was made of the magazines on sale, more than fifty-five per cent. of

them were found to be morally unfit for young people's reading.

Not only is this true of the magazines that are being sold openly, but there is a tremendous underground traffic in still more frankly lascivious literature. These are published and find their way through clandestine channels to each town where they are sold privately to young people. One must almost know the password in order to get them. They are written in a way that glorifies the illicit and make heroes and heroines out of the lowest type of human beings.

It is perfectly obvious, therefore, that our real aim in regard to literature for our children must be the creating of an aversion for this sort of "offensive reading" and the developing of a taste for the things that are wholesome. Just as by nature a child repudiates spoiled apples and prefers apples that are sound, so we must build up such an appreciation of what is pure and wholesome in literature that the opposite will nauseate him.

This being true, every home should endeavor to have a definite policy for the de-

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velopment of such tastes in the mind of the child. It will not be based upon prohibitions, the mere autocratic parental statement that "you can't have bad books," nor will it rest back purely upon the authority of the parents. These two authorities will pass. Home training along this line should begin to build from within, in early life, an attitude that will enable the child as it grows to protect itself against the kind of destructive reading that is so common.

When books are purchased, or magazines subscribed for, we should not consider that our duty is done when we simply have them where the children can reach them. We should introduce a child to a book or magazine as we would introduce him to a friend.

A suggestion that piques a child's curiosity, or some reference to a hero in the story, will oftentimes create a desire to go further with the book. After a book is read, if the child is asked to tell some incident from it or to tell why he likes it or to think of some one else to whom he would like to have it given, such things make the book seem more like a personal friend.

Character Building

The relation of books and magazines to character-building is too obvious to need extended discussion. Parental indifference to a child's reading may be the prelude to the discovery that what the child is reading is directly undermining all the moral and religious instruction that the home is giving.

In my ministry I have frequently had parents come to me heart-broken over some apparently sudden lapse on the part of a child, only to find that the internal moral disintegration had long been going on because of the things the child was reading.

It is worth while for every parent to obtain an adequate outline of good reading for children. Such an outline is found in *A General Guide to Reading*, by Macy, published by Baker, Taylor Company, or Arnold's *Mothers' List of Books for Children*, published by McClurg, or such a list could be secured from a teacher at school, or from the public library. It is not essential today that a home should be wealthy in order to afford its children good reading. All that is necessary is

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that the parents know what they want their children to read, and then make use of the public library of the city or town, or possibly the traveling library in the country.

Good books and fine stories are great aids in moral training. The impressions of honor, of justice, of clean sport, of purity, of chivalry, and of service, that boys and girls get from reading the right sort of stories in youth, are too great to be overestimated.

Religious Training

But books and papers have a close relation to a child's religious education, and parents will be well repaid who give definite thought to this line of reading. A child's Bible-story book might well be one of the earliest to be purchased. Some form of Bible narrative, such as Stewart's *Tell Me a True Story*, could be read to the child. Later, as soon as the little one begins to read, a book like Hurlbut's *Story of the Bible* could be either read to, or by, the child. At a still later stage, Kent's *Shorter Bible* will be a splendid form of the Old Testament to put into his hands, and New Testament stories and incidents in the

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American revised edition would normally follow. At some early period, of course, the parent will see that a fine copy of the Scriptures is either given to or earned by the child. The more sentiment that can attach to this copy the better. The early years should be used to saturate the child's mind with the Bible and its narratives. From, say, eight to twelve, when the general story-book age arrives, it would be well to have at hand such books as *The Book of Missionary Heroes*, by Mathews; or *African Adventures*, by Mackenzie; or *Golden Windows*, by Richards; or *Joel, the Boy of Galilee*. The religious impression here is definite, but from them the child gains a real thrill. If a child from twelve to fifteen could be introduced to, and absorb, such books as Wallace's *Ben Hur*, Fosdick's *Manhood of the Master*, Speer's *One Girl's Influence* or his *Marks of a Man*, or Slattery's *Just Over the Hill*, Maclaren's *Bonnie Brier Bush*, or Grenfell's *The Adventure of a Life*, or some of the Bible stories by Van Dyke, like *The Other Wise Man*, *The First Christmas Tree*, etc., there would be built a conception of good reading that would

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make much of the other literature that comes into view seem cheap and tawdry by comparison.

The above suggestions are made, not with any thought that they form an adequate list, but as presenting types of books that might be read.

Every child will be helped by having access to some sort of current literature. For boys some fine paper like *Boys' Life*; for both boys and girls, the *St. Nicholas*, *Youth's Companion*, or the *John Martin Magazine*; or for those interested in travel, periodicals like *Everyland*, or the *National Geographic Magazine*, or a magazine dealing with a boy's and girl's hobby on stamps, birds, radio, electricity, would be a useful thing.

One of the objectives in a definite policy for a child's reading is to give a balanced ration. As Christian people, we should not attempt to restrict our youth to reading so-called religious books, particularly to force them to read sentimental religious books that fling preaching at them or constantly moralize. Nor should we try to force them to read books that are beyond their capacity to under-

stand. These cause resentment and defeat our ends. As far as possible, we should attempt to develop in them such an interest in what they read as to give them an appetite for more.

“ Funny Papers ”

Today the “ funny papers ” create a distinct problem in connection with children’s reading. Different attitudes may be taken toward the place they fill in our modern life, but it could be fairly said that they frequently offer a cheap form of humor and present a not particularly elevated point of view. Yet for many children they form the most regular reading outside of school. Youngsters rush for them daily. It is the big event of the day for them when the funny sheet comes. And, what is worse, the Sunday supplement is becoming the big event of Sunday for many an American child. To say the least, such a condition is deplorable, from both the mental and spiritual point of view. Some homes may attempt to exclude it altogether and prevent their children from reading it. I, personally, advocate and practise this with the Sunday

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paper. But the comics are so ubiquitous that if a child wants them a way will be found to get them. A better way is to get the child to realize how utterly inadequate they are as a complete reading ration. We have had more results by appealing to a child's mental pride, by inquiring, after a child had finished with the paper, what he had read and learned from his reading, making him realize that if he had read only the funnies he had passed over real current events of importance to gulp down material that, for the most part, was comparatively useless.

Eventually, there develops in the child's mind a method of measurement by which the funny paper comes to be seen for what it is and is relegated to the minor place it should occupy while the really important pictures and news items have major attention.

I have no hesitation in saying, unquestionably, that I believe the Christian home has a perfect right to see to it that neither the child's nor the parents' minds are saturated on Sunday morning by the Sunday "funnies." It would be hard to choose anything that would be less conducive to the spirit of

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devotion and reverence that God's day and God's house deserve.

The heroes of a child's reading are almost as real to him as though they lived and talked. If we realize this as thoughtful Christian parents, we shall be as careful to see that our young people keep good mental company as we are to see that they choose good living companionships.

VII

PICTURES AND THE FAMILY CULTURE

A picture has the ability to teach through the eye and to support the teaching that comes through the ear. We have only begun to understand, in our educational life, how great is the opportunity that teaching through the eye affords to us. Even as these lines are written, a headline in a newspaper carries the story of a great commercial concern having developed a plan for the extensive use of moving pictures for educational purposes in the public schools, a plan which is being accepted by many educators. While the use of moving-pictures in the home for educational and religious purposes may yet seem some distance in the future, the opportunity there for the use of ordinary pictures is commonplace, and they are so easy of access as to be within the reach of almost any parent who realizes their value. It would be of interest if we had space to point out the cultural effect of an appre-

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ciation of good art in general, and great pictures in particular, but here we are concerned, primarily, with the opportunity which pictures offer for the moral and religious training of childhood.

The Ministry of the Scrap-book

In connection with the telling of stories it will be found of great aid if the father or mother can get from some concern like the Perry Picture Company of Malden, Mass., or the American Tissot Society of Jersey City, N. J., a catalog of their pictures and select therefrom as many of these pictures as they desire to make into a scrap-book. This scrap-book can then be used to illustrate a Bible story, or hero story which they desire to tell the children. It will be found a simple thing to acquaint the child both with the pictures themselves and the stories that attach to them, and such a scrap-book will become a constant treasure-house of story suggestions to both the parent and the child. It has the added advantage too of offering something that catches the eye of the child while the story is being told, thus enabling him to re-

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ceive an impression through the eye-gate as well as the ear-gate.

The Great Masters

The popular form in which the great pictures can be secured through these two channels and others like them, enables any home to have the best. While it is easily possible to be so classical that a person might refuse to get some beautiful picture because it was not by one of the great Masters, nevertheless, take it by and large, the child who gets his impression from a really great picture has the added advantage of a cultural impression and contact with a great artist that will be an advantage all through life. For little children, for instance, such pictures as Murillo's "Saint Joseph and the Christ-Child," or Reynolds' "Infant Samuel," or "Holy Night," by Mueller, or Correggio's "Holy Night," or "Christ Blessing Little Children," by Plockhörst, or any one of the many beautiful Madonnas, can as well form a background for the story as some cheaper or less worthy presentation. In addition to the pictures that may be gotten for the scrap-books, every home

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should purchase prints of some of the more beautiful paintings in a larger size and in color and have them hung in the different rooms. These can be obtained today, either from the companies referred to previously, or from such places as the Medici Prints, Foster Brothers, 4 Park Square, Boston. Or one can get colored reproductions in more expensive form from places like A. Braun & Co., 356 Fifth Avenue, New York City, or the Detroit Publication Company, Detroit, Mich.

If parents are inclined to go further into this field, they might by the investment of a little money secure a book by Dolores Bacon, *Pictures that Every Child Should Know* or *Famous Pictures for Real Boys and Girls*, by Lorinda Munson Bryant, or *Stories of Great Artists*, by Olive Horne and Catherine Scobey.

The effect of good pictures in the home is always uplifting. It would be hard to make any adequate list for the home wall, but the following are samples from a large group of religious pictures from which one might choose: Hofmann's "Christ in the Temple," or "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler,"

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Millet's "Angelus," or "The Light of the World," by Holman Hunt, "Christ at Emmaus," by Eichstaedt, "The Infant Samuel" by Reynolds, and also some splendid interpretations of scenes in Christ's life by Eugene Bournand of Paris, his interpretation of the Prodigal Son or the Great Commission being particularly fine. Da Vinci's "Last Supper," the "Madonna of the Chair," "The Sistine Madonna," and other beautiful Renaissance pictures are good if we can give them a proper background. Some of the stories about these pictures are unforgettable, and if told to a child would explain the picture and make it of far more interest than it would be otherwise. Pictures of great churches like Westminster Abbey, Saint Pauls, York Minster, Notre Dame, Rheims, Milan, Saint Peters, Saint Marks at Venice, and others are interesting if one will take the time to make them live.

Prof. Augustine Smith has a fine list of pictures for the different rooms of the home which he includes in a folder gotten out in connection with his plans for a "Service of Dedication for a Home." Copies of it might

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be obtained by writing to him, care of Boston University.

Make Pictures Live

This leads me to emphasize the fact that even if these pictures are purchased, it need not be expected that they will accomplish the effects desired simply because they happen to hang upon the wall. The amount invested will have its value greatly enhanced, for the purpose we have in mind, if, each time a picture is purchased, its purchase and hanging could be the subject of a family council. If on a Sunday afternoon each child could be asked which one of the pictures in the scrap-book he favored as the one to be purchased, in larger form, for the wall, this would focus each one's attention on the pictures and create a background of personal interest. If also when the picture selected was ready for hanging, another family gathering might ensue, certain things might be done that would forever fix that picture in the minds of the children.

Suppose, for instance, that the picture were Hofmann's "Christ in the Temple." One

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child might easily be asked to look up Hoffmann, to see why he was particularly qualified, or what he did to become particularly qualified to paint Christ's picture. This could probably be found easily through the public library. Another might be asked to read in the Bible the story to which the picture refers, and see who some of the men might have been who were pictured as standing by the Christ. Another child might be asked to say what he thought of the people whose faces were pictured, what kind of folks they might be. Another, and the greatest question, might be, What impression comes from the face of the Christ? In this way the picture would come to live in the child's mind. "The Rich Young Ruler," by the same artist, might be made so vital in the child's experience that it could greatly affect in the years to come the choice of a life-work.

Another line of valuable religious instruction that pictures open before homes today, comes through the stereoscope. While there are many who may think this particular method a bit antiquated, it is probable that a Sunday afternoon series of travels through

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the Holy Land or of Sunday-evening travels, following Christ over Palestine by means of the stereoscope, might be among some of the most interesting and instructive ways of having the child come in touch with the marvelous life of Christ on earth.

We have found still another mechanism for pictures which our children have loved. We purchased a balopticon for a few dollars. The current for it was obtained by plugging it into an ordinary electric-light socket. We purchased it first to enable our children to live over in memory trips which they had taken, and we commend it to others for that purpose. With it the children could themselves take the ordinary colored post-cards so easily secured on trips, and by showing them for the family or for their playmates, really take their travels over again. Of even greater value from an educational standpoint, was the scheme later tried in connection with future trips, namely, securing in advance, from a stationery store, in the place to be visited, post-cards of scenes that were soon to be seen by the eye. This made the places mean much more when the actual trip took place.

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Having the instrument on hand, however, we soon found it valuable in connection with our religious training and Sunday-afternoon adventures in becoming familiar with the great artists' conceptions of Christ and his life-work as portrayed in their famous pictures. We found it easily possible to secure prints of these pictures in post-card size, or Perry pictures could be easily mounted to be put into the balopticon. One of the boys ran the machine while the mother or father made the comments on the picture or one of the other children told the story which grew out of it.

Pictures catch a child's imagination. We can at least learn this much from the Sunday supplement. And if we learn this much, and apply it in a wholesome way, to our children's spiritual development we may make even that uncouth development of our modern life do something to offset its secularizing influence.

VIII

MUSIC IN THE HOME

From time immemorial music has been profoundly influential in human life. The songs that have been sung around the hearth have been the inspiration of innumerable stories and poems. Through the choice of songs and development of sentiment attached to them, whole national traditions have been formed. The Hebrew chants, the Scotch songs, the English ballads, the national war-songs, the crusading hymns, and the religious melodies which the children of different nations have each in turn learned in their homes, are among the great influences of history. The truth back of the remark "Tell me what the people sing and I will tell you what they are" is an interesting sentiment for parents to consider when they stop to ask themselves, "What place does music have in our home?"

If music ever had a large place in the past it ought to have an increasing place of influence today. Radios, victrolas, and player-

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pianos on the one hand bring more of others' music into our homes, and, on the other hand, the schools and other public and private means of training offer our children opportunities to learn how to use instruments and their own voices. Therefore, parents may well give thought to this great power in the moral and spiritual training of their children.

It is as true here as it is in reading that the very facilities that enable our children to obtain the good, can, and do, bring them also the cheap and harmful. Here, again, the main aim is the development of a basis of judgment which will enable a boy or girl to know the good from the bad, and a taste that will insure the choice of the good. This has been called a "jazz age," and it is true that that kind of music has been popularized and that spirit has gone so far as to "jazz" many of the old, and even sacred, melodies of the past. I believe, however, that taking it by and large, the very factors that make great music live and cheap music die quickly, are fighting on the side of those who prefer to have a high-grade taste developed in their

children. An experiment carried on by the radio broadcasters is worthy of note. When broadcasting was new, requests were made to listeners to indicate the type of music they preferred. The first referendum showed a decided taste for jazz. A later referendum showed a distinct reversal, and requests the second time majored on high-grade music. At the time of this writing the various stations seem to vie with each other in giving better and better music to the public.

A Taste for Good Music

The tastes of the children can be partly formed by the type of music upon which the home puts the stamp of its approval. If, for instance, the records bought and the ballads sung in the home, represent the tawdry taste, there will be little question that the child will fall in with it. On the other hand, we are convinced that a child will be more permanently enthusiastic over good than over inferior music. I can recall when our first-born was four years of age, she had as the favorite piece which she wanted played and replayed on the victrola—Kreisler's "Caprice." She

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loved it more than any other, and kept her love for it till the day of her death.

If a child is to be trained by a special teacher, greatest care should be exercised to see to it that the teacher is one who can impart an enthusiasm for better music.

We would not have it understood by what we have said that the home should take an attitude of prohibition toward the jazz type of music, because in the long run our children do not get the proper moral approach to a question when it is settled purely by parental fiat. We must test the adequacy of any moral and religious training we give by the question as to whether there has been developed within the child the personal ability to discriminate between the good and bad, and the desire from within himself to choose the thing that is right, strongly enough to repudiate the thing that is wrong. If the child's choice depends upon the dictation of parents, the desired final results in moral training have not been attained. Therefore, as this principle is applied to our present discussion, the part of parents should not be the laying down of a hard and fast rule that no jazz should be

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brought into the home, so much as developing in the child a recognition of the inadequacy of those things that are less worthy and an appreciation of the things that are finer.

Music and Religion

But the moral value of music in the home is not gained simply by teaching the child appreciation for great classic compositions, or even of oratorios, though these have their place. It comes more by relating beautiful music to fine inspirations. Music is a remarkably successful vehicle for memories. If, in a child's mind, a beautiful hymn is associated with a great and sacred moment of home life, the singing of that hymn in years to come will bring back the inspirations of that experience, and it is at this point that home music has its great religious opportunity. Parents should, therefore, attempt to form these associations in the mind of a child.

Let me give an illustration of what I mean. In my boyhood home we had a family hymn, the beautiful poem of "O God of Bethel." It is stately and beautiful in its meter, historical in its setting, and its music is simple and dig-

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nified. At every great family crisis we sang that hymn. At the death of my grandfather; when I first left home for college; when I made my decision to enter the ministry; when our home was uprooted at one place and moved to another; when my father began a new line of work; when sorrow came; when a great joy entered the home—at all such great moments when the family gathered, as part of our worship we sang together those words,

O God of Bethel, by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led!

Our vows, our prayers, we now present
Before thy throne of grace
God of our fathers! be the God
Of their succeeding race.

Around that song today cling memories so sacred that no matter where I might be or how I might be tempted, if the strains of that tune were to be sung, or a snatch of its verse to be repeated, I should immediately be surrounded in imagination by everything that was noble in my past.

Again, each Sunday morning, at worship, we would sing, "Lord, In the Morning," and each Sunday evening, at the supper hour, we sang as our evening grace at table, "Saviour, Breathe an Evening Blessing." To this day when either of these hymn-tunes are raised in my presence the pictures of those sacred moments of my boyhood come back in all their radiant freshness. "Deep calleth unto deep," said the old Psalmist, and that verse might be applied in the realm of music, for the "deep" reach of great hymns into the "deep" places of the soul is one of our commonest experiences.

Learning Great Hymns

With this background it is easy to see why I would place sacred music as having a very vital place in the training of a child in religion. A parent who teaches a child to know and appreciate large numbers of great hymns has given that child an inheritance that is more than money.

Care should be taken to see to it that the hymns chosen are of a worthy type. With the same amount of time and strength a child

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can be taught a hymn that will be standard fifty years from now, or it can be taught a jingle that will be passé before the child gets out of school. Such children's hymns as "Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us," "Jesus, Tender Shepherd, Hear Me," or "I Think When I Read that Sweet Story of Old" are so standard that a child who learns them can, in turn, pass them on to the next generation without fear of their deterioration.

Children love hymns that have pictures in them and tunes that are melodious, but these can be found as readily in good hymns as among the sickly, sentimental poems, or jazzy tunes, which abound in some of the cheap collections that are so widely advertised.

"The Church's One Foundation," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Nearer, My God, to Thee," "Rock of Ages," "Fairest Lord Jesus," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," are all old, but the pictures are clear and the tunes singable. Among the later hymns, "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee," "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life," "This Is My Father's World," "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies"

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and hundreds more, offer words and music that children will love and will sing, and when they have them they will have something standard that will last as long as they live. Further than this, if these hymns are associated in childhood with memories of high and holy moments, the hymns will live to carry those memories through a lifetime, and will be performing that ministry when the one now a child has grown to old age. Let us teach our children great and good hymns, and inspire in their hearts a love for them.

Sunday Afternoon Singing

Sunday afternoon forms a natural time both to learn and to sing these hymns. A home group gathered around a piano on a Sabbath afternoon singing these wonderful hymns is prophetic of great things for the future.

Care should be taken to see that the children understand the words of the hymns. Ofttimes they have strange and distorted conceptions of a hymn because they do not know its meaning. My mother said that she had one of the most beautiful gospel hymns

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practically ruined for her because of the words "The consecrated cross I'd bear," for even to this day she has a picture of "the cross-eyed bear" which in childhood used to haunt her when that hymn was sung.

We should see that the child knows the meaning of the hymn. Ask one of them to explain the meaning of the expression or give his idea of what he thinks the person may have had in mind when he wrote it.

Often a story about the hymn will make it live for a child. Matheson's "O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go," or Rutherford's "The Sands of Time Are Sinking," get new and powerful fascination for any one when they know the background against which they were penned.

In selecting records for our victrolas, also, we can broaden our children and enable them to enter into the treasure-house of the past. What child will not be blest by becoming familiar with the "Hallelujah Chorus," "He Shall Feed His Flock," or "Is It Nothing to You, All Ye that Pass By?" or other gems from the great masterpieces that for generations have told again the Christmas story, the

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message of Calvary, the glorious hope of Easter, and other supreme Christian messages?

The home that fails to capitalize the values for spiritual blessing which music offers has passed by a wide-open door of opportunity.

IX

TABLE-TALK

If properly handled, table-talk in the home can become as good as a year's schooling and as influential as a Sunday-school class, though it probably never would become either if it were so labeled.

When you stop to think that two or three times a day the family comes together for its meals, and that this is usually the only time when the family does come together, it can easily be realized that these are important moments in the life of the group. Here, if it is ever going to achieve a sense of unity, the family has its opportunity. It forms an opening for the parental guidance of the child's thinking. Ofttimes, here, by a comment on some situation described by the child, the parent can inject more moral fiber into its being than by half a dozen preachments or Sunday-school lessons.

In the Sunday school the cases for moral discussion are usually theoretical, but around

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the table the situations which the children describe, through which they have passed during the day, are intensely real in their minds. Whether Johnnie hit Billy Jones' nose when he called him a name, or Susie did call Mary a "cat," when she told on her at school—these are intensely interesting and living questions to Johnnie and Susie. The attitude taken by the parents in the light of the recital of the events makes a strong impression. Therefore, it is well for us to look at table-talk as a means of education in culture, in family cooperation, and in moral and spiritual development, and to make the wisest possible use of it to these ends.

Table-talk as an Education

We have found that the table affords a great place to review any travel trip that had been taken as a family. The father would begin, "I am thinking of a certain building in a certain city with such and such an exhibit in it." Immediately the mind of each child is keen to try to locate the building, and after it is guessed one of the children begins to describe something else that had passed under

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his eye on another trip. Before the meal was over the auto trip of the summer, the last train trip, or other experiences that might have otherwise become faintest memories, were brought back and made increasingly permanent as part of the child's mental equipment. What is the value of travel if it does not make its scenes a permanent part of our thinking? Stoddard says in one of his remarkable books of travel that the scenes that he has looked upon have deposited in his memory the kind of riches that no one can steal from him. By closing his eyes he can call again before him in imagination the Taj Mahal, the peak of the Jung Frau, the broad sweep of the Nile, or the inscrutable look of the Sphinx. With a child such impressions of travel can be either glimpses that pass never to return or can be made part of a lifelong equipment. The summer trip, whether to the mountains or the lake; or a lovely view, whether it is the memory of a glowing sunset, or the vision of a waterfall, can all be brought back and lived over again by conversation and fastened so that it never will be forgotten.

Here, too, at the table, come forth the new

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and fascinating facts that the schoolroom has brought to the eager mind of the child during the day. Here the parent can expose his ignorance and put himself out of touch with his child's development, or by his comments can make himself one with the child in the eager appreciation of the marvelous world in which we live. After the boy or girl has dilated upon some new appreciation of nature that they have received in the study of science, the father and mother can, by a single word, show it as the handiwork of God and make what was merely a laboratory in a schoolroom become the workshop of the Almighty.

It was not given to my father to have an extensive education in school, but by his conversation with us as children, while we were in day-school and even through our collegiate and technical training, he never failed to make us feel that he was keeping his mind open toward the larger world that was about him and always gave us the impression that a man who really knew God had the elements of an education that enabled him to appreciate all lesser things that this God had created.

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Parents should not allow the table conversation to drift into useless chatter, but by suggestions and questions steer it to a worthwhile level.

The Table and Character

In its effect upon character, however, table-talk has its greatest opportunity. "Character is caught, not taught." Our children often obtain a stronger character-forming impression from us through a chance remark that displays our inner attitude than by our preachments when we are supposed to be moralizing. A father's favorable comments upon a grafting but successful politician may do much to make a boy admire successful evil, and prepare the way for his own lowered ideals of citizenship in the days to come. A mother's remarks about the young man whom a neighbor's girl has married, may do more to make her own daughter believe that marriage with a man of money is successful, regardless of his character, than any talk to the contrary that a mother may give to that same girl.

Children frequently gain impressions by in-

direction from the stories that parents tell. How easily a child learns to be irreverent in the use of the name of God. We have heard parents, in order to tell a story that is funny, bring in the name of the Master or the name of God in a swearing relation in the presence of children, and the scar made on the child's spirit of reverence stays there for years.

Again, for instance, stories that reflect upon people of different faiths, or make fun of other races, or sneer at the sacred things of the people of other religions, stories which indicate unchristian points of view, will all reflect themselves in the child's make-up.

“ Criticism ”

Probably one of the most common evils of conversation at the table is displayed in the use of criticism. Either a spirit of fair understanding of one's neighbors, or of critical faultfinding, can easily be developed in the child by the parental attitude at the table. Here a teacher can have all chance of further helpfulness to the child taken away, or his usefulness increased, according to the attitude which the parent takes. Here the influence of

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the minister or the Sunday-school teacher can be largely wrecked or made by the remarks of the parents. Here the spirit of fair play to the school and to playmates can be engendered, or the exact opposite fomented. It will largely depend upon whether the parents seize the opportunity to do and to say the right or the wrong thing. One home we know has adopted the policy that people, as persons, will not be discussed at the family table in the presence of the children or those who are helping them in the home. Certain it is that a most careful guiding of the table conversation to avoid unfair criticism will pay in the whole home development.

It is not to be forgotten, either, that the table offers a good place to train our children in the gifts of conversation and in the greater gift of listening. If politeness of manners and of speech are, as we like to believe, primarily expressions of a genuine Christian spirit within the heart, then the table affords a fine opportunity for the practising of these gifts. When a little one starts to talk and Johnnie breaks in with his impetuous story of an affair at school, while sister is trying to

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tell mother on the side about the new dress she wants, one can easily see that the family table has become an arena for the conflict of different types of selfishness. Here parents can show how a real Christian courtesy expresses itself through a willingness to let the youngest one of the group have as fair a deal as the oldest. This means for brother that he waits for the little one to finish; it means for sister that she does not whisper across the table secrets that all are not entitled to hear; it means for each one that he is under obligation to listen as fairly when another is speaking as he desires that one to listen when he is speaking. Such an hour spent at the table will develop great elements of Christian character.

“ The Unseen Presence ”

The main value of having grace at the table is not at all in going through the religious form. As Doctor Cope points out in his very helpful book on *Religious Education in the Family*, a great contribution is made when it helps all to become conscious of the presence of the Unseen Guest at the table, and thus

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consciously try to conduct themselves as in His presence. The custom of invoking God's blessing upon the mercies provided may soon become a mere form, but it can also become a "pillar of cloud by day" which throws its glory over all the conversation and the contacts of mealtime. After an hour spent around the table in the mood induced by such a presence, family differences are ironed out, the spirit of nagging and quarreling among the children disappears, father's sense of strain is gone, and mother's over-racked nerves are relieved.

The table, in some ways, is the center of the modern family life, and it may become in a very real and beneficent sense also the center of its moral and spiritual inspiration.

X

THE HOME AND ITS AMUSEMENTS

Play affords the home a perfectly natural, as well as intensely interesting opportunity for character formation.

Children play as naturally as they eat. Amusement is a normal part of every life, and can be so utilized as to have a strong moral influence upon the members of the family.

One of the dangers in modern life is caused by having so much of the amusement of the family furnished outside the home.

There was a time when the home was fairly self-contained, so far as the fun-life of the circle was concerned. Then the amusement was most of it furnished by the inventive genius of the people within it; either the children or parents invented their own games. The parties which took place were conducted in the homes, under the chaperonage of the parents. The value of this type of amusement was that it stimulated the inventiveness

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of the people who partook of it, developed the contacts of the family circle, and enabled the amusement to be selected from the right point of view; and it was carried out usually in the presence of those who cared for its effect on the children who participated.

Today the furnishing of amusement to our young people has become to a large extent commercialized. By far the largest amount of time spent in pleasure-seeking, by the average young American, is spent in places where amusement is sold just as clothing is sold. The danger here comes from the fact that the amusement will be produced from the point of view of the amount of money that it will return to the man who has it for sale, rather than with the question uppermost as to the effect it will have on the characters of those who partake of it. This is a subtle but dangerous situation, and the home needs to face it. Under the push of commercialization our young people are being offered much that is questionable. This is true in the movies, on the stage, and in our amusement parks. It would be a wholesome thing if homes could come back more nearly to the custom of fur-

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nishing entertainment to their own children. This, at least, would enable amusement to be picked out for its own sake and selected so that it would help instead of hurt the child, as it does frequently when a child has to go into the open market to purchase fun. A young person's mood of relaxation affords the best possible opportunity for temptation. Young people do not usually go wrong when they are at work, or at school or at home, but they do more easily fall into evil when they are looking for a good time. Therefore when they are in that mood and are offered amusement of a wrong type, the result is likely to be very injurious.

If a home can invent, or maintain, amusements for the child, it enables the parents to know what is being seen, or said, or done; enables them to know the playmates with whom their children associate; offers one of the greatest opportunities for the parent and child to develop points of contact, and keeps the parents young by playing with the younger generation.

Through play too a child learns the moral lessons of good sportsmanship. While we

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normally think of this being learned in such outdoor games as football, or tennis, it is perfectly true that in such indoor games as authors, parcheesi, checkers, and such other simple forms of amusement children can be taught how to become fair in their moral attitudes, to gain a high scorn for cheating, a fine spirit in play, and to know the obligation to be a good loser. An attitude of good comradeship can be instilled by indirection through games played in the home where the parents have a chance to take advantage of those critical moments that always rise in such a circle.

Home Equipment

If more of the money that parents sometimes spend upon themselves could be spent on affording a child facilities for home play, it might easily change many a home. It takes very little money to make a basement corner a fascinating place for a boy, where, with his tools, his electrical apparatus, and his radio parts he can have a veritable wizard's den. It takes but little to change a nook in the attic from a dust-covered, spider-web-bedecked

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spot into a fairy land for dolls, doll-house, buggy, and other paraphernalia which makes a girl's paradise.

A few dollars will turn a backyard into an outdoor playground, with a swing, trapeze, teeter, sand-box, slide, and innumerable other attractive features that will furnish the children plenty of "thrills." A little money spent in one's own backyard will change the tendency of the children to wander elsewhere after school into a desire to rush for home as soon as school is out.

How little it takes to stack a drawer in the living-room with authors, flinch, parcheesi, checkers, chess, and dominoes, or other simple but intensely interesting forms of home pleasures.

People may claim that they cannot afford these things. But we spend our money on the things we want. A simple and inexpensive car will get us to our destination and back. But in order to "keep up with the Joneses" we spend enough on a more expensive car to buy ten outfits of the kind mentioned above. Whereas the extra money spent on the car may hurt the child in developing pride, etc.,

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spent in the way indicated it may be as valuable as any like amount spent on the child's education, clothing, or health, and in addition be very influential morally and may save many a heartache for the parents in years to come.

Sunday Games

There was a time when, if we spoke about games on Sunday, people would raise their eyebrows, but some of the most interesting and profitable hours of Sunday afternoon can be gained by using a little ingenuity and making the spirit of play lend a hand in the impressions that are created.

Suppose we take the story told at a morning church service, or at Sunday school, and let the children of the family act it out in the afternoon. I recall one happy Sunday afternoon of our home life when our little four-year-old took the part of the baby Moses, our oldest girl became the mother, the boy dressed up as Miriam, while the mother became the princess, and the father the wicked king. The whole scene became real to the children. The parts they took fastened that

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story into their minds so that it has never been lost, and the impression of God's watch-care that was easily given by a few words at the close before we went to our afternoon sing, put in the memory of the children a spiritual impression that they refer to even yet.

Or, take the telling of a "guess who" story around the circle. Let each one tell a story without names, and ask the others to name the characters that fit it. Or the game of Bible authors, or the spelling of a word in the familiar fashion, "My first is," "My second is," describing either a Bible character in the one case, or a Bible book in the other, and letting the word chosen be spelled by using the first letter of the Bible character or books as they are described.

We have found that the mere quizzing of the children on Bible facts, Bible names, and Bible stories, is a source of unending interest to them. They love to see how high a grade they can make in their replies to questions, and in other tests of like nature. And yet this combination of religious instruction and play spirit makes of Sunday not a time

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to be dreaded, but a day "of all the week the best."

Never will I forget the thrill one afternoon when our three children gathered to work out the story of Jonathan and his attack upon the Philistine garrison. A box made the fort. Long rows of dominoes standing on end made the soldiers for the Philistine garrison, and a domino perched on the edge of the box made the soldier on guard. Then two blocks, representing Jonathan and his armor-bearer, came across the floor, and scaling the sides of the box, represented the attack by these two doughty champions. The man on guard at the top of the box turned in flight, fell over, and each of the Philistine domino soldiers, in turn, was laid low until the two fighters of Israel stood alone on the field, all this to the great joy of the children. For years, whenever we came to that story of Jonathan, they would refer to the thing that made it so vivid in their minds.

If parents are interested in this use of Sunday afternoons I would suggest that they purchase two leaflets by the educational staff of the American Institute of Child Life, one on

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Sunday in the Home, and one on *A Year of Good Sundays*. These can be gotten for a modest price, and are full of suggestions.

Outside Amusements

Probably any discussion of the home and amusement would be inadequate today that did not at least refer to the problem which is presented by the relating of the child in the home to amusements outside of the home, over which the parents have no control. It is perfectly true that there are a great many things which parents may question, that are popular in school groups and in other circles in which the young people move. Particularly this is true for children above the ages of fourteen or fifteen. Things which, as the child says, "everybody does."

This problem is too large to discuss completely here. Suffice it to say that we believe the key to the wise attitude of the home toward these questionable amusements will be found more in the word "substitution" than in the word "prohibition."

Over and over again we have seen, in homes where resort was made to the purely pro-

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hibitory attitudes, that the child found ways and means of getting the forbidden fruit in spite of parental orders. The effect of thus securing the prohibited amusement fruit is bad in every way. If the thing indulged in is actually bad, the child has the evil effect of such indulgence, but in every case the situation has the effect of estranging parent and child, and of breaking the spirit of good comradeship and understanding that ought to be maintained as far as possible between the two.

Let us try to get our children to realize that there are some amusements that are plainly bad, some amusements that are plainly good, and some amusements on the border-line between the two, and that there are plenty of those about which no question can be raised; therefore the most sensible point of view is to admit into our lives that which is wholesome, rather than that which is questionable. Let us help them to see that they do not want questionable fun, not because it would shock father and mother, but because its effects are bad on them, and they are the ones who pay the bills for it. Eating green apples may be against father's orders, and if the child eats

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them, father may be displeased, but it is the child's stomach that aches. Get them to appreciate the point that in partaking of questionable amusement they are neither smart nor brave, but foolish. This distinction will help reclassify it in their minds. Children love to be smart or daring, but they hate to be thought foolish. There is nothing heroic about eating tainted meat, or spoiled fruit, or drinking sour milk; nothing particularly smart about flirting with diphtheria or tuberculosis germs. Here common sense tells us that the farther we keep away from disease germs, and the farther we keep from tainted meats or fruits, the wiser we are. If our children could be made to feel that their wisdom and good sense were proved by their ability to know and to use untainted amusement and could see that they would have to pay out of their own pockets if they caught the disease germs of wrong amusements, it might make a great many such questions fall into a different catalogue.

Pure prohibition does not gain what we want, but developing in our children the ability and desire to substitute the wholesome for

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the questionable is the real key to a right solution.

Play is a natural instinct. Through it many formative influences enter the life of a growing child. Too long have we left this part of life to be exploited by the forces of evil. Let the children of light be as wise as the children of darkness. Let us use this play instinct as a channel through which the lessons of life shall flow into the lives of our young people.

XI

THE TWO AND THEIR MONEY

An old writer once said, "The love of money is a root of all evil."

Today we could paraphrase this and say, "Money is an easy source of family dissension and misunderstanding."

It has been our observation that it is exceedingly easy for married people to get into disagreements, and even heartaches, over their financial affairs. That some set of principles ought to exist to guide married people in the solution of money matters seems clear. We are of the opinion, after having watched many homes deal with their money, and discussing it with many others, and after twenty years of dealing with the situation in our own home, that the general attitude toward money included in the teachings of Jesus Christ affords the most practical set of ideals that can be found anywhere. This offers the key to a real solution. Before discussing as we do in the next chapter the "pocketbook as re-

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lated to parents and children," we wish here to enlarge upon the principle which can aid the husband and wife to find a basis for their own adjustments.

The general principle we would word in this fashion:

Money is to be kept as the servant, never allowed to become the master. It is to be a servant to the major purposes for which life exists, and in order to insure this the Christian religion lays down the general idea of stewardship. Its background is as follows: God is the owner and the giver of all things. We, his children, handle our money as we do our time or our strength, as stewards to whom he has entrusted these things during our lifetime. In recognition of this relationship some proportion of what is received is to be first of all set aside, as especially sacred to him. This proportionate amount is then administered for his kingdom. Further, the balance of the income is to be used, not selfishly, but in the same spirit in which a steward would naturally act.

There are those who might easily think of this as intensely religious, but hardly prac-

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tical for the average person. In our judgment it has immense elements of practical value for us all.

In the first place it demands most careful accounting of what is received. If we decide that we shall set aside a proportion as sacred, this in itself means that we budget our income and expenditures to that extent and produce a frame of mind, that in most cases induces a general budgeting attitude toward the rest of our money. It is this very attitude that is one of the keys to satisfactory money management in the home. The adopting of this principle will oftentimes save for the family a good deal more than their giving costs them.

In the second place, it induces an attitude that makes safer whatever money we do have. Money is only good for the things that it buys. It can be used foolishly and thus be a source of weakness and actual harm. Any conception that makes us use a part of it for wise purposes tends to be an insurance policy that the balance of the money will be used wisely. Take as an illustration the case where money is inherited. Whether this is morally helpful or harmful in the home depends on

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the attitude of the two. The character that would be indicated if they had adopted the policy of putting God first in their money matters would also be a guaranty that their inherited money would not become a source of moral difficulty to them. The same would be true in cases where wealth was gradually acquired.

Again, the attitude above indicated would guide the two into touch with the finer things of life. It would induce a study of the Christian principles in their home affairs that would spread into all departments.

Further, when they came to give the money so set aside, it would unquestionably bring them into touch with a good company of people interested in broad and helpful causes and would probably put them in touch also with some splendid institution like the church, where the friends made, and the environment created for the home, would be worth all and more than their giving costs. Many young married people have testified to me that the idea of stewardship in their money affairs has been a constant anchor holding them in touch with the largest things in life.

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In the next place, this attitude of stewardship, by putting God first, brings us into the Master's presence, and provides the right sort of spirit in which to approach money problems. It has been our observation that trouble comes largely because of a selfish attitude on the part of one or the other, or of a wrong mood in which the problems are discussed. Given a right attitude between the husband and wife, most difficulties quickly disappear.

Take, for example, the old-fashioned idea that the man was the only earner in the home, and therefore should control the money, while the woman, because she was paid no money from outside, earned nothing, and therefore had nothing to say about the money distribution. How selfish such an attitude is and out of place in the light of fair dealing with each other which the Christian principle involves! We may be thankful that this old attitude is rapidly passing, and yet it is probably fair to say here that even yet we can find homes where the wife is given no chance, has no part in the income that she can honestly call her own, and has practically to beg her husband for any money that she gets. One husband

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we heard of a short time ago was so mean that he borrowed some money which his wife had left to her, and then at Christmas time gave it back as a Christmas present. While this may seem humorous it is no more consummately selfish and unchristian than the actions of some other husbands. If she has it, we have known husbands to take it and never give it back even as a present.

Again, take the problem of debt and extravagance, and all the problems that grow out of attempting to "keep up with the Joneses." How naturally these things can be solved if the general principle that money is to be a servant and not a master, is adopted as the basic ideal for a home. Where it is the master it becomes destructive of all peace. We see this where a mother teaches a girl that a man with money is a good "catch," whereas one without it is a poor "catch." This distorted idea as to the value of money is the source of all sorts of misunderstanding as to what is essential for a happy home life. "I would rather have a son-in-law who is worth a hundred thousand dollars and hasn't a cent than I would have one who had one hun-

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dred thousand dollars and was not worth a cent," said a man not long ago. By this *bon mot* he threw into relief this point we are making. When money is kept in the proper place in our thought it enables us to have a fair judgment on life. When it gets out of place it distorts everything else.

Relate this again to the matter of handling our income. "Twenty dollars a week income and twenty-one dollars a week expenditure is hell, whereas twenty dollars a week income and nineteen dollars a week expenditure is heaven," said some one. We may quarrel with the figures, but we cannot disprove the fact that when the home is running into debt nerves are on edge and irritation is a commonplace. Whereas the mood in a home where the budget is balanced, and a little saved for the rainy day, is one of quiet confidence, and this enables problems to be discussed in the right spirit. Still further, the conception that money must be made to conform to the higher purposes of the home has constructive value in the long run. Debt is, much of it, caused by an attitude of mind. This generalization may be proved untrue in

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specific cases, but it is true enough for us to look for its cure, first of all in the attitude we take. Some people so chronically raise their scale of living faster than they increase their incomes that they would be running into debt were the income one hundred thousand dollars.

The spirit of unselfish fair play induced by a genuinely religious attitude is to money matters what oil is to the engine. It is worth more than any other lubricant as an aid toward the solution of the problems that surround the discussion of money.

XII

THE FAMILY POCKETBOOK

Love, money, and children are three of the great things that bind married folks together. Divorces increase in an age when there are few children. Also divorce comes more easily when the economic urge to live together is lessened. Not many people have realized how much easier it is for a woman to break marriage ties when she can easily earn her own living, than it was in a day when marriage was about her only hope for support. No wonder women won't stand as much today as in those days.

“The Family Pocketbook” is an expression that is prophetic. It presages a better day dawning in the relation of all members of the family to the matter of finances. It indicates a sense of mutuality and partnership in the handling of the family's money that means fairness for the wife and training for the children. This supplants the old tyranny exercised by the husband over the

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wife and also the old idea that children are to be used as a support for the parental home, instead of the American ideal that the home is the trainer of its children for the future homes they are to make.

First, we emphasize as we have done previously that the money should be handled mutually by the husband and wife. She should know what he earns, they should both agree on a budget for expenses and divide the bills and the income between them, leaving some amount to which each one is entitled for personal expenditures. If the wife does her part as the homemaker and mother, she amply earns her half of the home's income as truly as does the husband. The right to charge things at the store is no adequate substitute for letting the wife have cash which is her very own, and which she can spend as she likes.

No time need be taken to emphasize at length the need for the two to begin their home and maintain it on a basis that keeps within their income. Living beyond our income is a cause of infinite unhappiness. It is always easy for a home to raise its scale of living, but the most embarrassing thing in family life is

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to have to admit, by publicly lowering the scale of living, that it overshot the mark or suffered reverses.

But the home, when it rightly manages its pocketbook, is also a great training-ground to give the children a right approach to the place and use of money in a well-ordered life. In a previous chapter we have indicated what we consider the fundamental law underlying a right conception of money. This law is outlined in the Christian doctrine of stewardship. Here we deal more fully with some of the very practical applications of this general idea to homely daily living.

Each child, as it comes to the place where it has any reason to handle money, should be given an allowance. The object of the allowance should be clear, and a report on money expended should be expected and given. Only a very small amount should be given any child for personal pleasure. Untold damage is done today by the large amount of money put into children's hands. Extravagant tastes and foolish and often dangerous habits are thus induced. The amount of money which the parents have does not specially affect this.

A good example is sometimes set by our wealthiest folks. Edgar Guest once told me that he was standing by the wife of one of America's richest men when their lad came to ask for money to buy a pair of gauntlets such as all the boys were then wearing. He wanted six or seven dollars. She asked what the rest of the boys with whom he played were paying for theirs. She was told two or three dollars. Then she said: "That will be enough for you. Nothing is gained by putting on airs over the other boys."

Every person must learn some time the value of money. If it is not learned in childhood, the cost of learning it later will be much heavier. While we in America do not expect our children to work to support the home, we want to be careful that our children do not grow up with a lazy or parasitic attitude toward life. Some part of the tasks about the home can early be given to each child; if desired the allowance can offset this, though care must be taken to avoid giving the impression that room, food, and heat come without work. Somewhere we must instill a sense of high scorn for laziness and an attitude of ap-

preciation of the dignity of good work well done. Youth must learn that work is the price of progress, and with it one can go almost anywhere or accomplish anything. If the home income cannot be stretched to allow higher education for its young people, parents can give them a knowledge of its value, an ambition to attain it, and teach them how to work to get it. Sometimes this is better than handing them the needed money.

The home has a duty in furnishing its young people with wholesome ideas as to the place of money in the home they are to found. The boy usually learns this. He is taught that he must earn a living for his home in the future, and usually sets out to prepare for it.

Not so often does the home prepare its girls for their part in the financial management of their future homes. Yet their part is just as important. Usually man is the earner and woman the spender. A stable financial policy in a home depends as much on wise spending as on good earning. Today when a man asks for a girl's hand and the father asks whether he can earn a living to support her, the man might, with equal propriety, inquire

whether she has been fitted to be a good and economical manager for the home he is to try to provide for her.

Many a girl starts home management today with little or no idea of how it should be done. One young bride went into a bank and asked to start an account. When asked how much money she wanted to deposit, she replied sweetly that she didn't care to deposit any, she didn't want that kind of an account; she wanted a charge account such as she had at the department store.

If the average girl could take a good course in home economics, or failing that, supervise her mother's home for six months or a year, before marriage, it would be great training.

A further word should be said here about the ideas the mother instills into the daughter in regard to the man she is to marry. The fallacy that a man with money will always make a good husband should be frowned upon.

It is far more sensible to teach a girl to appreciate the real values of manhood—industry, ambition, health, family background, character, etc.—than to get the glamor of in-

herited money in her eyes. Many a man's money has been the reason he wouldn't make a good husband, at least it is certain that a man's having money is no guaranty that he will make a girl happy as his wife.

One man's "hidden assets" may be worth far more than the few thousand dollars another man may have. If, as some one has calculated, a high-school education will increase a man's potential earning capacity \$33,000 during a normal lifetime, and a college education will increase it another \$72,000, a girl would be foolish even on a financial basis, who took as her husband the unambitious and lazy young inheritor of several thousands and turned away from an ambitious and educated young man even though he had had to work his way through college.

The home pocketbook should be so handled that it involves saving something each month. For the ordinary home probably no better way of saving regularly can be found than through life insurance. It has the added advantage of enabling a man to capitalize now his future earning capacity. I have no hesitation in urging every young man as soon

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as he is married to assume a good load of life insurance, and when children come, to add a good bit more. Straight, plain life insurance in a good, solid company is best, and instead of having it paid in a lump sum in case of death, it is better to have it paid to the wife over a period of years, thus assuring her of at least some support while children are dependent on her.

Finally, the family pocketbook should be a good servant of the Master, if it is to be a good servant of all the family. The proportion of income set aside for the work of the Kingdom should be a means of inculcating in the young people right principles of stewardship and a right understanding of the whole field of the relationship of money to the Christian life of the giver and to the coming in of the Kingdom of God. Money a means to an end, the servant of great purposes—this is the motto for the family pocketbook.

XIII

SUNDAYS IN THE HOME GROUP

The secret of the right attitude toward the use of Sunday in the home is found in the statement that we should rear our children so that they are more conscious of the things that they can do than the things they cannot do on that day.

The Puritan conception seems to have been largely one of restraint; at least the impressions which come down to us from that age leave that as the residue that has remained with us. We should stress the positive, not the negative, and emphasize the fact that Sunday is the one day of the week when the home is free to give itself to the culture of the highest things in life. It is not so much that things which are done on week-days are wrong when done on Sunday, as it is that a tragedy has occurred when a day that could be used for the highest things is filled up with the commonplace of ordinary week-day experiences.

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All of life is lifted and sweetened by the culture of the highest things. From this fount of inspiration flows strength for the rest of the week, and from this place where the soul gains new power come spiritual resources by which the tasks of the rest of the week are made more easy.

Children should be taught that school is closed and business is at a standstill on this day in order to give the entire family a chance to develop its inner life. Rest of body, change of thought for the mind, time to worship God, culture the soul, and develop the comradeship of the home on the upper side; time to bring cheer and render service to those who are in need—these are some of the lovely expressions of the finest life Sunday gives us a chance to enjoy.

Church of Course

It is probably fair to assume that those who would read this book would be of the company who would usually attend church on Sunday. While we touch on this subject in the following chapter we cannot avoid referring to it briefly here. There are so

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many excuses, however, that crop up these days, not only with the children, but with the older people, that it might be well to make clear to the child at the beginning that Sunday is primarily God's day. The fact that we have it at all grows out of his teachings. That it is in human society today has come largely because of Christian influence. That it is retained and protected is largely due to religious people. This being true, to take the day and use it without thought of God would be ungrateful, to say the least, and disastrous in the long run.

Today we hear people argue that because they are "cooped up" in the office or school all during the week, they must spend Sunday out in the open—at golf, or in a machine, or on the water—therefore they cannot get time for church. While many answers could be given to this, we might raise the question whether in the long run the person who takes all of God's day and spends it on rest of the body, with no refreshment of soul, is as likely to be either mentally or physically fitted to carry the same load during the next week as the one who divides the day between worship

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and rest. The "clean hands" and the "pure heart" which come from getting right with God are truly part of the best equipment with which to do worthy work in God's world.

There are those who say, "I can be as good a Christian if I worship out-of-doors as I can be by going to church." It is fair to answer to this, where it is an honest attitude and not merely an excuse as it is in ninety per cent. of the cases, that we have both the example of the Master and the command of Scripture in favor of going, and also there is the obvious common-sense argument that if everybody took the negative attitude there would be no church, and without the church the very moral training and social blessings that come from organized Christianity would soon disappear. If one wants the values which the church brings to a community it is only fair for him to associate himself with others in maintaining the institution that produces these values.

Radio Christians

One of the temptations today is to substitute radio for church attendance. We have

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gone far enough with that invention now to begin to realize that while it may minister, and does minister, to those who cannot get to church, it may be a snare to others who have usually attended and can attend. We cannot substitute that method of listening for the time-honored custom of associating ourselves with others for public worship in God's house on God's day without spiritual sloth and religious deterioration tending to set in.

Remarks sometimes made by older people that "they were made to go to church when they were young, therefore they won't go now," are frequently camouflage. Such reasoning is no more accurate than to say that because they were made to go to school they won't think now; that because they were made to eat then they won't eat now. The attitude taken by some parents that they will leave to the child the decision as to whether he will or will not go to church is to make religion seem cheaper to the child than his daily school. He has to attend that regularly, and in the home no excuse that would not be accepted as a reason for his staying home from day-school should be either accepted or ad-

vanced as a reason for his staying at home from church.

Sunday Afternoons

But the main problems, in most homes where a normal religious life is lived, rise not with the time when the family goes to church, but with Sunday afternoons or evenings.

It might be worth while to acknowledge that we, as Americans, suffer a good deal from the tyranny of the Sunday dinner. We take it for granted that on that day we must have the great meal of the week. This often places a burden on the mother, and involves so late a meal as to make Sunday a day of unnatural meal hours. The result is that this causes the children to be additionally tired because they wait, mother to be tired because she prepares the meal, and all to be tired in the cleaning up. A far simpler meal that could be prepared more easily and nearer the regular time would bring to the home many more values than it would lose.

Sunday afternoon should be thought through in the light of the needs of both parents and children. The needs are not usu-

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ally the same. To the father and mother it normally should bring some period of quiet and rest. While it may be expected that the children will spend some time quietly, we ought in fairness to give them a time of activity if the day is not to seem unnatural and boresome to them. Some part of the afternoon should be a quiet time for all. During that time if father and mother are resting the older children might easily be reading, or the younger children might be busy with reading, memory work, or cutting pictures for scrap-books for hospitals, or any other attractive method of making good use of that time.

We are likely to forget today the great value of learning passages of Scripture, beautiful poems, and great hymns. Between the ages of eight and fourteen a child can easily memorize. Unless some guidance or pressure is brought to bear, however, such memorization is not likely to take place, but with the proper suggestion children who usually love to enter into contests will learn a large amount of splendid material, zest being given to the experience by the slight element of competition involved. Each home would natu-

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rally have special passages which the parents would choose for the children to learn. A suggestive list which we have advocated that our parents use, and which our church school uses for its general memory work, is as follows:

For children 4 to 8: Luke 2:8-14; Matt. 6:9-13; 19:14.

For children 9 to 12: Ps. 23; 46; 95:1-7; Micah 6:6-8; John 3:14-17; Matt. 5:3-12; Isa. 53; 55:1-11; James 1:22-27; 1 Cor. 13; 2 Peter 1:5-11; Gal. 5:22, 23.

After the quiet time there are innumerable ways of using the next period. It should, however, be a time that requires participation and activity by the children.

Where they have been doing memory work it could very easily include a test that evidenced what they had learned. Another method of Sunday-afternoon activity that has great advantages is the working out of Bible stories previously referred to, the playing of Bible games by questions and answers, or one might use some of the Bible card games, with the questions and answers upon the

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cards, played as the game of authors is played.

Still another line of activity for the afternoon is a walk with father or mother into the park, or the woods, if they are accessible, with the quiet, intimate talks between parent and child on the beauty of God's out-of-doors. Often on occasions of this kind the conversation may easily drift into the more intimate problems that a child is facing. As I look back upon my boyhood I believe that the walks I took with my father on the way to his preaching engagements on Sunday afternoons, were among the very influential periods of my life. In these days the family car is the vehicle, but if it is used, certainly the use should be in keeping with the spirit of the day. A trip where the children go to take flowers to a sick friend, or to play and sing for some shut-in neighbor—these and other forms of service activity make very beautiful and useful ways of using Sunday afternoon.

Other homes have found the "Sunday-afternoon sing" a period of real interest and unfailing help. With some one of the family at the piano, and the others gathered round,

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the hours of Sunday afternoon pass all too quickly; particularly is this so where there is real musical ability in the circle.

Sunday Evenings

Where the members of the family are old enough so that Sunday evening is spent at church, the program for the evening is fairly clear. Where the children are young, however, Sunday evening is usually spent at home. This time gives a natural opportunity to the mother to read or tell the fascinating stories of Bible history, to acquaint the children with the lives of the great missionaries, and to bring in other elements of spiritual culture that might not so normally come into a child's life during the days of the week.

Another phase in the home's Sunday problem grows out of relationships to others outside of the home. The family friends who come to visit can become either an excuse for disrupting all the plans or can be made to fit into the usual customs, and themselves receive the blessings that the family has planned for itself. If we adopt the former method, it

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practically results in preventing any constructive use of Sunday. We have known home after home to drift out of any regular religious habits because its members allowed their church-going or Sunday-afternoon plans to be disrupted when others came to visit them. On the other hand, there are now homes that never allow visitors to interfere. They are taken along to church and fitted into other plans as members of the group. If friends understand, when they come into our home on Sunday, that they are expected to fit in with our plans, attend church with us, and do what we do, they will soon either come because they want to do that or stop coming entirely on that day. We should be careful also to see that our visiting on Sunday shall not be allowed to interfere with the normal use of Sunday by others.

Where there are young folks in the home it is a natural thing to expect a certain amount of intervisiting among others of their age. Sunday has long been a day when young people's minds turn easily to thoughts of courtship, nor is this a tendency at which we should be surprised or which we should want to prevent.

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Indeed, it would be a great advantage if the result of the tendency should be to raise the spiritual approach to courtship. Our young people could have no finer service rendered to them by the Christian family training than to make the high plane of Sunday thinking and action the background for friendship and love.

To sum up, then, our aim as parents should be to make Sunday the big day of the week; to watch against restraint or making the day so inactive as to be dull; to fill it with the most wholesome and happy experiences for the entire family, and send all out into the next week with new power and resources.

XIV

THE FAMILY IN THE CHURCH

We are inclined to look back to the "good old times" when the whole family went to church and sat in the family pew, and to lament the fact that today so little of this is done. Taking it for granted that this is so today, I raise the question whether this decline is necessary, and whether we should meekly submit to its going further. Why not take the ground that the idea of the whole family together in the family pew is worth retaining in its entirety?

Children get the habit of going to church, and get their attitude toward the church largely from their home training. While we do not need to argue that religion and church attendance are synonymous, it is a conviction too obvious to need defense that it is of great spiritual value for the boy or girl to get the habit of going with others into God's house on God's day, to praise and worship the heavenly Father and be instructed in the Christ-

like way of life. If any one doubts the value of this habit let him ask himself the simple question: "Do I think the strength of this nation in years to come would be greater or less if the habit of using God's day for church worship should disappear and in its place our people should give themselves to attendance at movies, sport contests, the reading of Sunday supplements and various other types of secular pursuits?" We may not want to return to the Puritan customs, but, we know that the great convictions fastened in the minds of our forefathers, by an attitude that held that day sacred to God, are the steel girders at the center of the structure of American civilization.

The Church Habit

The home that is dealing adequately with its children in this realm will take it for granted that all the family goes to church on Sunday, even as Christ, "as his custom was, entered into the synagogue." It should not only be taken for granted that all are going, but attendance should be habitual. As we have pointed out no excuse from attendance

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should be offered by parents or children that would not normally prevent the parent from going to business, or the child from going to school. Reducing church-going to a habit saves a great deal of strain and struggle over the matter. If each Sunday morning, as it comes, the question is open and each one enters into a debate as to whether he will, or will not, go, arguments are advanced, excuses are brought forward, plans are held up, and time after time nobody goes. If it is the custom of the family, most of this is usually avoided. To train children so that they will have a regular habit of attending church is to send them out into life with an asset as definitely helpful as good health or money in the bank.

Parental Example

If our children are to acquire the habit of regular church attendance they will get it more from parental example than from parental admonition. While admonition may have its effect on a child's action up to twelve or fourteen years of age, sooner or later a child begins to do what parents do, and if father

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sends the child to church while he stays home to wash the car, or read the Sunday newspaper, the tendency, particularly for the boy of that home, will be to do as father does.

The home should be careful, also, to create the right attitude toward the church service. Children should be given to understand that we go to church primarily, not because we like the minister, nor to meet other folks, but to worship God; they should be led to see that his blessings to us have been constant; that this day is his day; the church is his house, and the group gathered there are his children who come together there to thank him, to learn more about him, and get inspiration to live like his Son, and that any who go to church with that point of view can get some blessing and help for the next week's work. It is necessary to refer in this connection to a matter which we deal with in part elsewhere.

Parents should be very careful of the criticism which they make about the church or the minister or the church-school teacher. Ofttimes the time and strength put in by a minister or teacher is practically lost, so far

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as its helpful effect in a given home is concerned, because of the unwise criticism indulged in by the parents of that home.

Honor for Workers

We need to bear in mind that church-school teachers, for instance, are in almost every case giving their time; they are serving with the desire to obey the Master and help the child; they are attempting to give the children religious education, and it comes with poor grace from parents, who, in many cases, will not work in the church school themselves, when they take toward the teacher an attitude of criticism rather than of co-operation. Teachers are entitled to as much sympathetic understanding of their attempt to help as we can give, and unless we are willing and able to go in on the voluntary basis and do better work than they are doing, let us back them and attempt to supplement what we believe may be their limitations, by the most sympathetic cooperation that we can give.

What is true about the teacher is true about the minister. Ministers are not saints, nor

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are they all-wise nor all-efficient, but take it by and large there are very few ministers who have not given far more time in preparation for their task in proportion to the money they receive for their work than any other class of men in the community, and there are very few churches to which a family can go where its members cannot receive some blessing and help from the sermon if they will come to it with an attitude of expectation and eager spiritual hunger. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," is true today as of old. It is true also that no matter how good a minister or a teacher may be, there is hardly a sermon or a church school that will not be ruined for the people of any given home if they come to that service with criticism and faultfinding. The attitude that the home creates toward the church determines largely what the church can give the home.

The church should be the greatest ally that the home can secure. It is attempting to help in the home's most important obligation, namely: character building and religious

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training. It has a right, therefore, to expect that the father and mother will not only cooperate with it to the full, but wherever there is a question the home will give the church the benefit of the doubt. In its effort to help our children the church certainly is entitled to our cooperation; most certainly it should not be placed where it tries to help them ahead while we hold them back.

The Church in the Home

Again, the home should never forget that, as we stressed in Chapter II, religious and moral training is primarily the duty of the home. When we bring children into the world and thus create eternal personalities, we are held responsible for our spiritual relationship to them. This is the point of God's reference to Abraham. God said, "I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment." Because God knew what Abraham's attitude would be toward his children in matters spiritual, God entrusted to him the founding of a nation. The continuity of the

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Hebrew people is a commentary upon that well-founded confidence. The church may aid, but it should never be allowed to supplant us in the religious training of our children.

Therefore, by all the ties within our power to form, we should bind our children to the Christian church. Their earliest memories should be associated with it. Most of our churches have some service of dedication where the parents bring the child shortly after birth and dedicate it to God and consecrate themselves, by the vows they take, to rear it "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." As early as possible the child should be enrolled in the church school and be made to feel himself an integral part of the church family. At the age of eleven or twelve the parents should watch carefully for the new developments in the child's own spiritual nature which will normally result in its personal decision to follow Christ through life and a registration of this in public confession. If the age of twelve or thirteen goes by without such an awakening the parents should use their influence to develop a sense of the

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necessity and naturalness of such a personal experience. Christian parents should not take it for granted that this sort of spiritual awakening will be guided entirely by the pastor or church-school teacher. Bringing a child to a conscious life decision for Christ is one of the greatest privileges that a parent can have in a Christian home, and when the day comes for the child's public confession of Christ, the entire family should come to that event with such appreciation of its sacred meaning that it will form the right background for the spiritual inspirations which should always remain associated with that event.

The Family Pew

We have said that the family pew need not be a thing of the past. More and more churches are rethinking their programs so as to put the child at the center. In some places they have a junior church for the child. In most churches they have in the worship time a talk to the children. In Lake Avenue Church we have introduced what we call the Three-Period Session Plan of religious edu-

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cation, in which all members of the family come to the first or worship period, in the main auditorium; they are seated together and worship together. As a result, instead of having thirty or forty children in our morning church service, we have anywhere from two to three hundred, and groups, where the entire family is seated together, are seen every Sunday morning.

The child should recognize also that it is not simply to receive from, but make its contribution to, the church. Each young person should be trained to have some definite part in the church activities; to give it out of his allowance, to work in children's and young people's groups, to contribute constructively to its social life, its service program, and its soul-winning activities. We have altogether too many church-members whose idea of church-membership is about parallel to the attitude of many college students toward football. According to the average student, his part is to say "Rah! rah! rah!" while somebody else actually plays the game. And, interestingly enough, most of the criticism of any given football team comes, not from the

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men who are playing the game, but from those in the grand-stand looking on. So it has been too often in our churches. Children have grown up to feel that their part in the church life is exhausted when they attend. Possibly they say, "Rah! rah! rah!" when somebody else does the work, but show a disposition to criticise the very people who carry the burdens.

The church is the body of Christ. When church-members adequately perform their function then it is efficient. By so much as any member fails in so doing the body is weakened. We Christian home-makers are also builders of the church of Jesus Christ. Let us see that we build that great instrument of the kingdom of God wisely and well.

XV

THE HOME AND THE COMMUNITY

The family is the fundamental unit in modern society. We state this with confidence in spite of the questions being raised about family life today, and the various social theories that give the family a lessened place of prominence in the social scheme. These may be interesting from a theoretical point of view, but actually, society's stability rises or falls in direct ratio as its family units are strong or weak. Therefore, the home has a close relationship to the civic health of any community.

The home is the community in miniature. Most of the problems that are to rise out in larger areas of the community are met in the home, and it is here that we either solve them or fail to solve them. We are rearing not only children, but future citizens, future home-makers, future leaders of industry, and future shapers of civilization.

The ancient story of God's curse upon Eli throws light upon this truth. Eli failed to train his children properly. This eventually broke the parent's heart as it usually does, but God's curse was pronounced because of the evil influence which his poorly trained children had upon the community. Out of Eli's failure and the consequent evil acts of his sons came forces that debauched the temple worship and polluted the whole stream of national history. History offers many an illustration of this fact, that the home training of a child later affects his whole relationship to the community in which he eventually lives.

Citizenship

In a democracy even more than under other forms of government, the strength of the commonwealth depends upon the adequacy with which each of its individual citizens is socialized. If a given person has learned to think in terms of the group, to limit his personal desires in the light of what is best for all, to obey the rules that are made for the good of the entire group, then he be-

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comes a good citizen. If, on the contrary, he has not learned these things and will not play the game according to the rules, will not restrain his own desires in the light of others' well-being, he is a bad citizen.

Closer than we think is the relationship between a child's home training or lack of home training and his citizenship in later years. The child that in the home is allowed to break the rules, disregard the rights of others and consider only its own selfish personal desires, is definitely being allowed to develop tendencies which may make him a lawbreaker in later years. The child that finds that there is no particular principle back of the parental desire, and that any ruling can be overcome by teasing, is being prepared to be, in later life, one of those dangerous citizens who by the use of graft or political pull and special privilege gets his way regardless of its effect upon the body politic.

We hear a good deal about the lawlessness of the younger generation. Unquestionably the judge was right who said much of it came because the parents of these lawless children allowed them to do as they pleased, to run

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over parental authority, and never learn the value of obedience.

Business

In like manner the home is turning out people who will be part of our industrial life. Whether they are to become good producers and solid units in our industries depends a good deal upon their training within the family. If in the home the child learns to work, to do the task assigned to him, thoroughly, without complaining, he is likely to adopt this principle, which is so vitally related to successful business advancement, in later years. But a child that shirks its work, is not held to any task, and drops anything that is hard, is being prepared to be one of those "ne'er-do-wells" in industry who wants only "the soft snap," constantly complains that any task is too hard, feels that any difficulty is sufficient reason for quitting, and that hard work is a thing to be avoided.

Another element, making for success in industrial life, is the ability to play team-work, to cooperate in a gracious manner with others who are round about us. In no other place

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can a person learn this as easily as he can in the home. Here is the home's chance to lay the foundation for the child's future industrial progress.

Home-makers

Possibly the largest contribution which any home makes to a community is made when it prepares its children to become successful home-makers. Our children are not only members of our families, but are to be the makers of homes in the next generation, as well. They are our children, but they are future husbands and wives of others.

There is enough unhappiness in the homes about us to make us parents pause and inquire whether the training we are giving to our children is preparing them for satisfactory home relationships in the future. The spoiled boy in the home will probably make the spoiled husband. The selfish and stubborn girl in the home will probably be almost impossible as a wife and mother. Girls who are babied by their mothers tend to remain babies. Home after home that goes to pieces today, does so because the husband or wife

never grew up. They are still childish, selfish, peevish, and petulant. Since they have not learned team-work, when mated with another, conflict is bound to result.

We must recognize the responsibility that we assume to man and God when we bring children into the world. We should seek to know the elemental principles of right living that the Master lays down for us and for our children; then we should train ourselves and them according to these principles, sympathetically, but firmly. The parents and not the children should run the home, but it should be run according to ideals and principles which the parents have because of careful thought and well-grounded convictions. Often the trouble today is that parents decide their choices for their children not by what is right, but by what is easy. A father decides his attitude toward his son not so much by what is good for the boy as by what will give the father most freedom for his business, his golf, his machine, or his lodge. The mother often settles her relationship to the daughter not by the daughter's needs nor upon principles chosen because they will build

the girl most broadly for the future, but on the basis of what will give the mother most freedom to carry out her own plans. If the parental decisions are based upon these grounds it stands to reason that a child will have little respect for them, nor can the parents defend the position when it is once taken. The result is anarchy in the home.

The state is built out of material which we parents furnish to it. It never has been a simple thing to train children wisely. It is not simple today. But if the right way can be found, certainly those parents who seek wisdom from the Creator and use the best of human experience ought to be able to find that way. If we cannot, who can? If the state has a right to look hopefully to any people, it has the right to look hopefully to Christian parents for the product which it can use to build solidly its structure for the future. When the state comes to us in time of war, we give our sons and daughters for its defense. Let us remember that the more usual, though less dramatic, demand of the state is made in times of peace; that demand is that we shall produce a generation of cit-

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izens that can defend the state against the more subtle internal evils that may permanently threaten its civic health and the perpetuity of its institutions.

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